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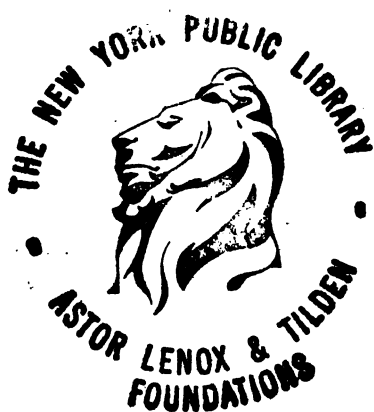
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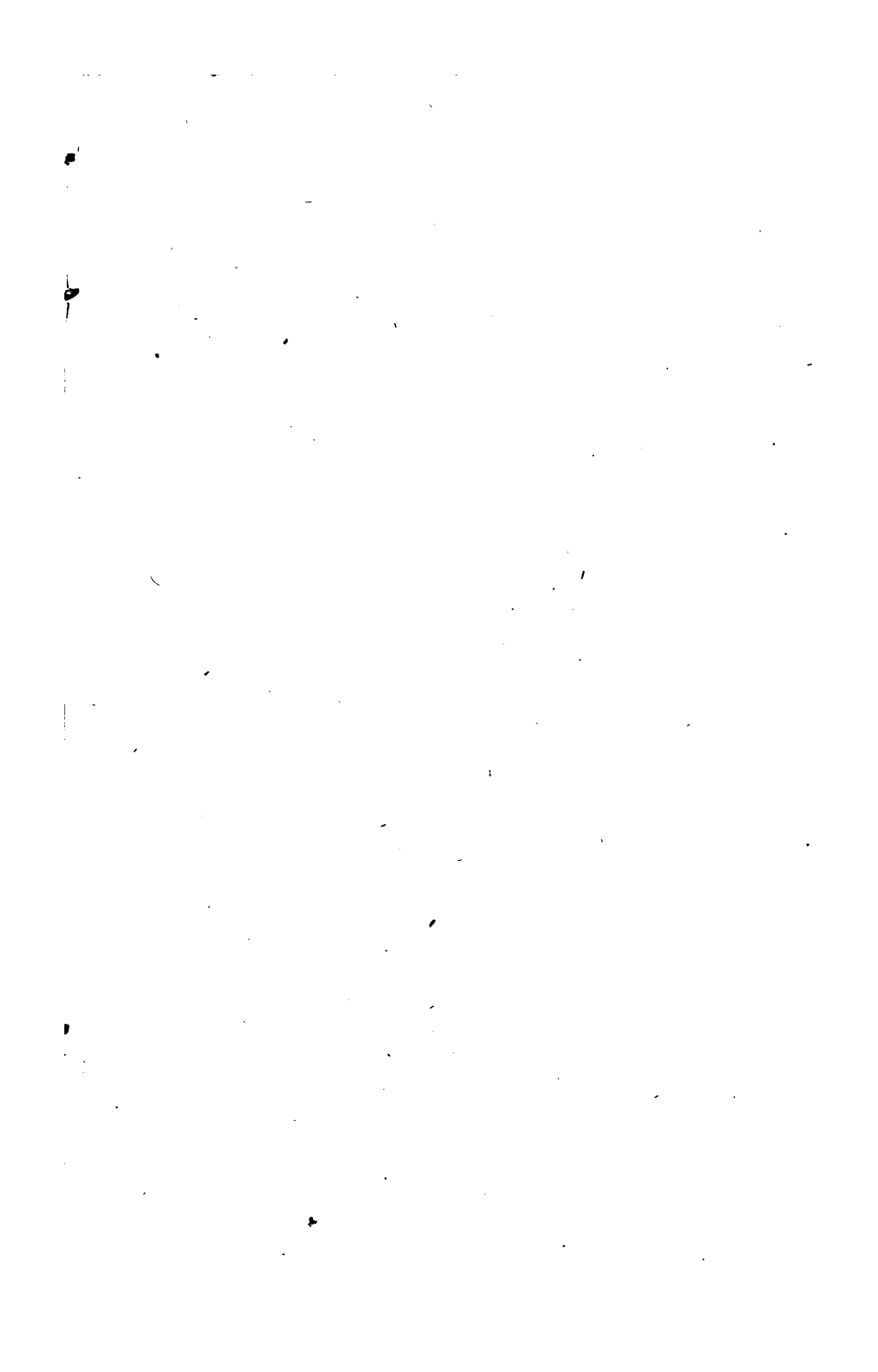
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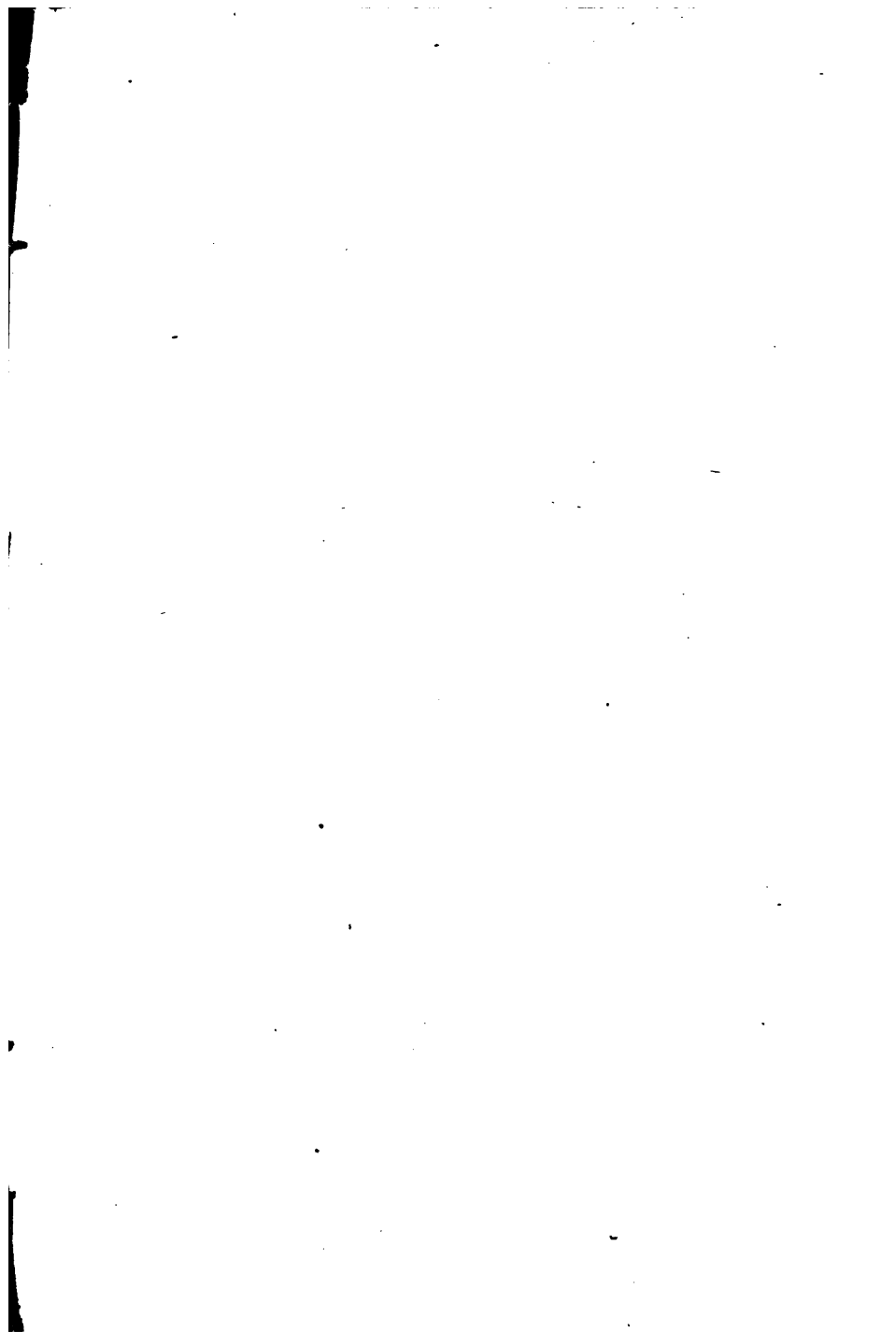
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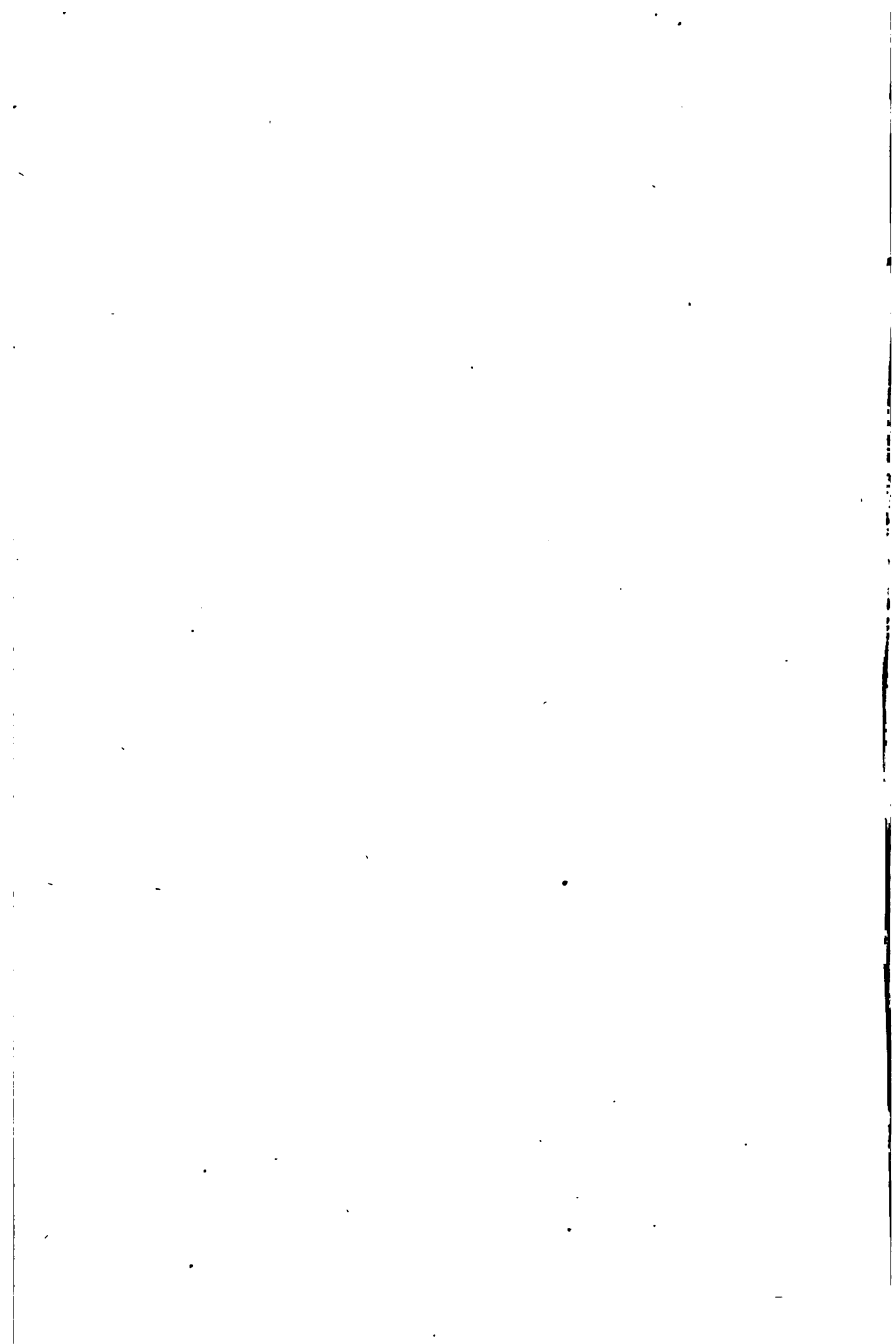
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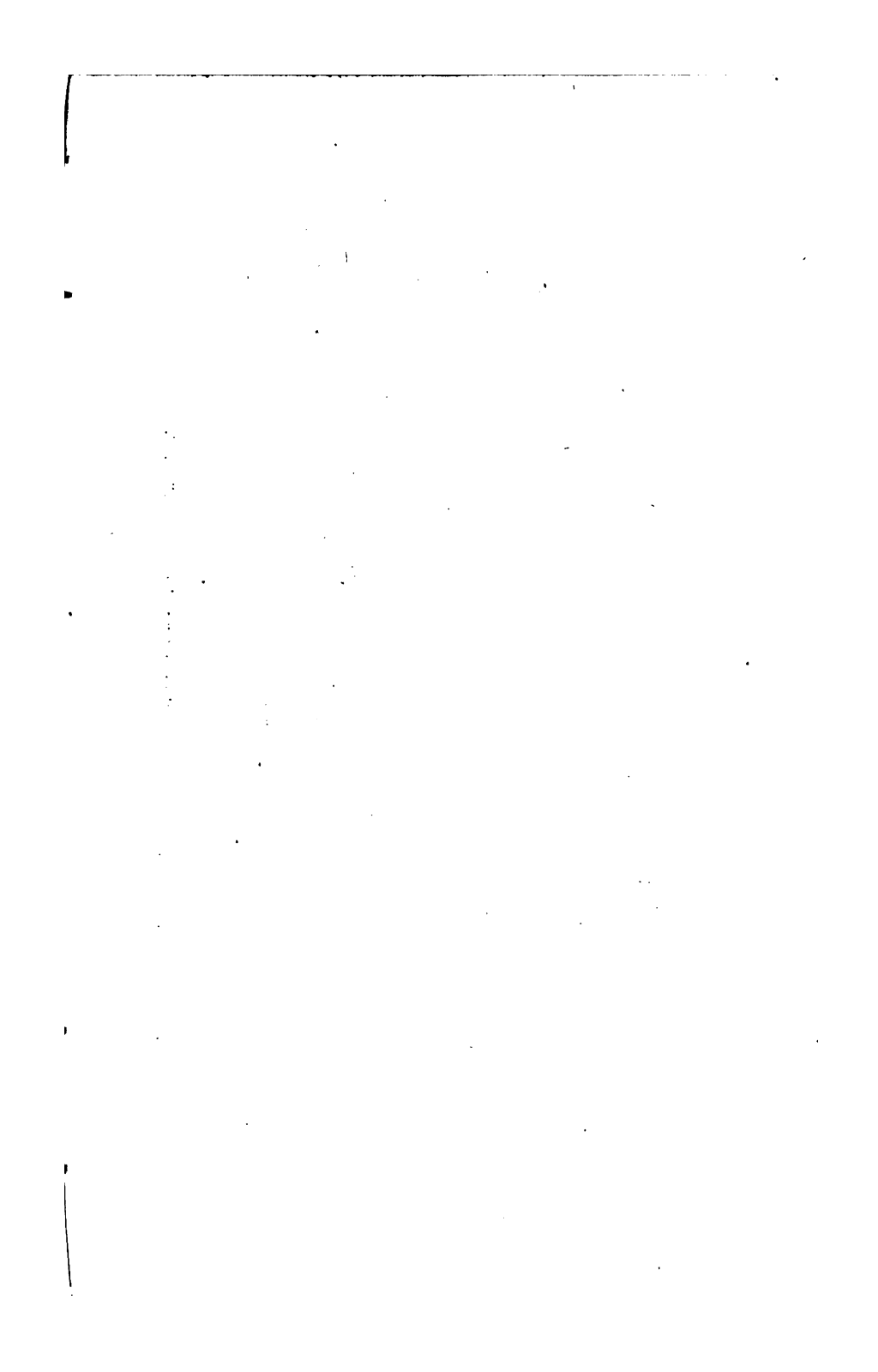
New Jersey













[*Front.* "Wife," said he, "I have called on the new tavern keeper to-day." p. 44.

THE FARMER'S FRIEND

"I have been using your

product for some time and

am a great fan of it.

THE FARMER'S FRIEND
L. S. GILBERT, JR., NEW YORK

THE FARMER'S FRIEND
L. S. GILBERT, JR., NEW YORK
NEW YORK, N. Y.
1884.

THE
INEBRIATE'S HUT;

OR,
THE FIRST FRUITS

OF
The Maine Law.

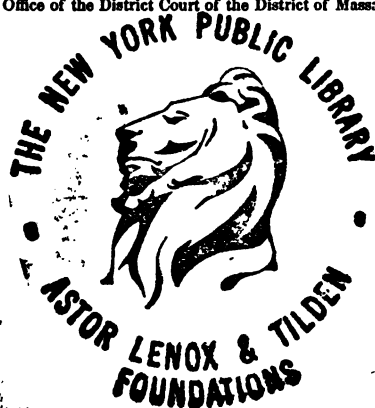
BY
MRS. S. A. SOUTHWORTH.

"O THOU INVISIBLE SPIRIT OF WINE, IF THOU HAST NO NAME TO BE
KNOWN BY, LET US CALL THEE DEVIL."—*Shakspeare.*

THIRD THOUSAND.

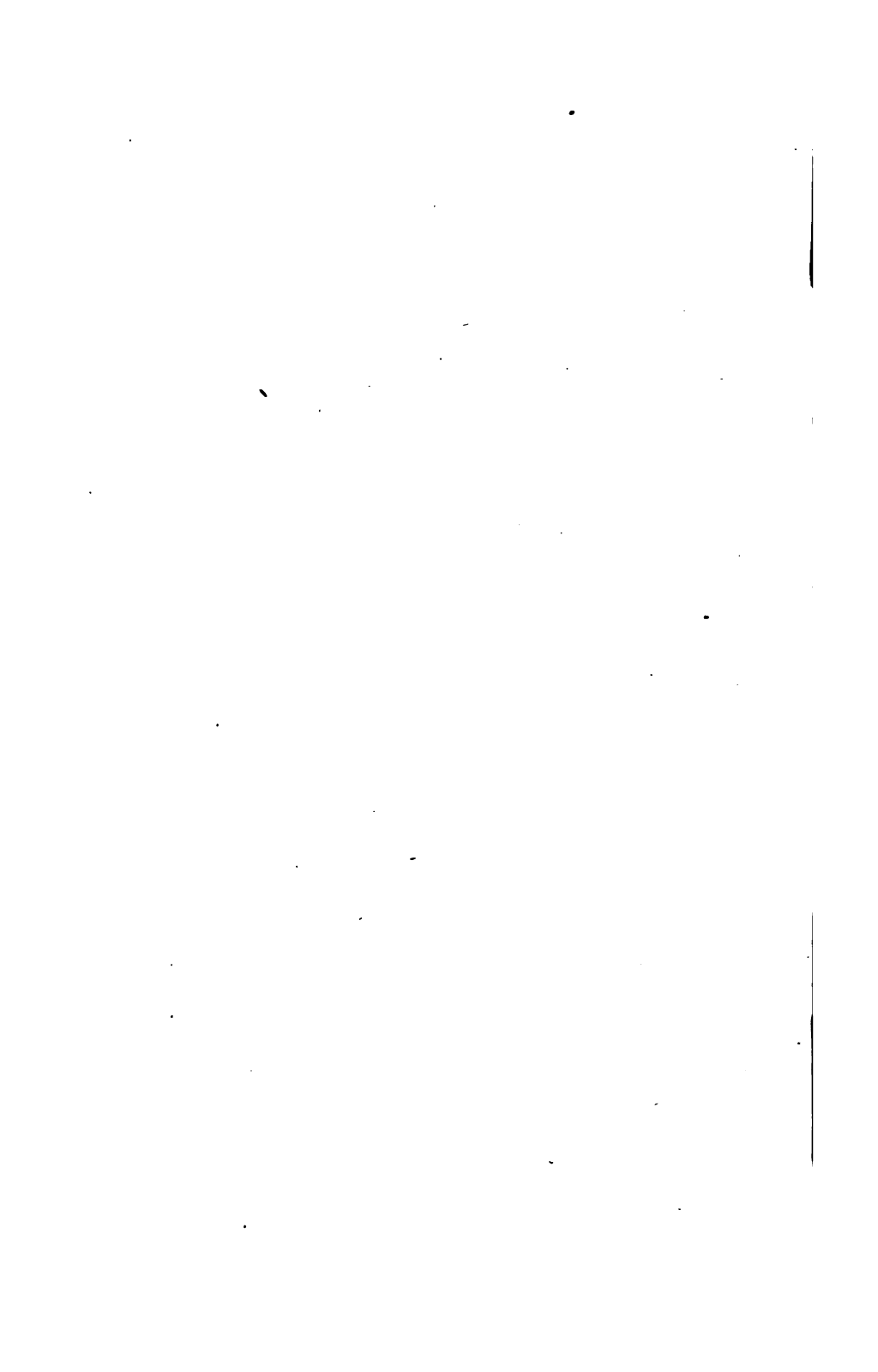
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THIS WORK
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR
TO
The Pioneers of the Maine Law,
AND ALL THE FRIENDS OF TEMPERANCE,
AS A SMALL TESTIMONIAL TO THEIR ZEAL AND UNTIRING EFFORTS
IN THE
CAUSE OF BLEEDING HUMANITY.



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THE INEBRIATE'S HUT.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FAMILY OF MR. MAY.—A DESCRIPTION OF THE HERO AND HEROINE OF THE STORY.

ALICE MAY was not destitute of attractions, either natural or acquired, — for she had been blessed with both, — but she was so modest, unassuming, and agreeable to all, both old and young, that she not only escaped the envy and jealousy of her young friends, but won the respect of all who became acquainted with her.

Her father was a farmer, “well to do in the world,” as his neighbors said ; but he always insisted that he was poor. Be that as it may, he had not only thought proper to give his daughter a good, thorough English education, but some of the accomplishments of fashionable life. Alice, from a child, had been very fond of music ; and now in one corner of the front room might be seen a substantial and elegant piece of furniture not positively belonging to the necessities of life.

Aunt Mercy called it "a great piece of extravagance." "You had better bought a spinning wheel, brother," said she, looking over her glasses. "Dear me! I wonder what won't come next?"

"I'll buy a spinning wheel, sister, if you want one; but as for Alice, she has got the 'music' in her, and there is the instrument that will bring it out; so don't say any more about it. If you won't, I'll buy you a new gown the first time I go to the city; at any rate, don't bother the child about it."

For a few days nothing was talked of in the vicinity of the Mays but the new piano, and music teacher, who had come to give Alice lessons. It was fortunate that it was a lady; for it was whispered around that she had a beau. But then the young gentlemen did not believe it,—they ought to know, of course,—and probably there was one somewhere who did.

Uncle Jim used jokingly to tell her "he did not know which was the greatest attraction—the new filigree, or its pretty owner."

Then Alice would clap her hand over his mouth, and playfully ask him to remember that he was young himself once, and should have married, and then he wouldn't have been there to tease her.

Mrs. May was a quiet, gentle woman, but seventeen years older than her daughter, and the relation existing between them was of the most tender and endearing nature; she supplying the place of sister as well as mother to her lovely child, who was now the only one; for two had

passed away—one brother and one sister. "Let us indulge her in every thing that is reasonable," said she to her husband, "for we may not have her long."

It is now Saturday night at the farm house; and, from the preparations which have been going on through the day, one would suppose that company was expected; but not a word has been said. Uncle Jim gives Alice a pat now and then, and looks amazingly "wise." Aunt Mercy taps her foot on the floor and says, "Dear me! what a touse! It warn't so when I was a girl!" There is a nice warm fire blazing in the front room, and no one there; (a capital chance to examine the apartment.) It may seem strange to those of the present day that the floor was uncarpeted; but so it was. The floor is tastefully marbled; for Farmer May insisted that "he had always been used to walking on 'terra firma,' and that he didn't want to take his feet in his hand every time he went into the best room, now that he was getting along in years, not he!" The furniture was rich and beautifully carved; but it would hardly suit the fastidious taste of the modern housewife: even the piano, which was one of the seven wonders of the day, would be considered clumsy and ungenteel by the city belle of the present time; and the tall, costly time-piece, which has stood for two generations in one corner, would not be admitted for one moment in our modern parlors. The mantel piece is carved, and over it hang two pictures in gilt frames—one of Washington, father of American liberty, and the other of Lafayette, a gilt frame mirror between them. Two chairs stand before the fire,

with their broad arms thrown widely open, as if inviting company. And now a lady, fair as the morning and lovely as a freshblown rose, enters, bearing in her hand a bright brass candlestick and a lighted taper. She is followed by a tall, manly-looking youth, about two years her senior. It seemed perfectly natural for them to take the two unoccupied chairs; and they did so. They are a noble-looking pair, although different in form and feature. Alice has brown, glossy, and luxuriant hair, dark, hazel eyes, fair skin, and beautiful teeth. Her features are not perfectly regular, but, when lighted by a smile, wear the sweetest expression in the world.

So thought Edward Lee; and he it was now seated by her side. Her form was frail, but her movements were full of life and animation. But, as there have been so many elaborate descriptions of handsome men, I will introduce my hero simply by telling what Edward Lee was not and what he did not have to do. He was not slim, nor crooked; he was neither affected nor awkward in his manners; he did not drawl in speaking nor brush his whiskers on going into church; he was not obliged to support himself with a stick no larger than a lady's finger. He had learned to go alone when he was a child, and did not think it necessary to ape the orang outang when he walked; but, notwithstanding all this, in aunt Mercy's estimation he had one great defect—and that was in his mouth. "Dear me!" she used to say. "I shouldn't like to say it out around; but I do believe I should have been married myself if I could have found a man without a cud in his mouth!"

She was a great hater of tobacco, believing in its debasing tendency.

Edward Lee was as unlike in character from Alice as in appearance. She was intelligent, yet gentle and confiding; he generous and noble, yet impetuous to a fault. With him there was no half-way place; and he ardently and devotedly loved the gentle being by his side. Taking her hand, he said, "Dear Alice, it has seemed a long time since I was here; but, now that I am with you, I can hardly realize that I have been absent at all: is it not so with you, darling?"

"Yes; but I am so glad that you came before dark that I can hardly think of any thing else, the road is such a lonely one."

"O, never fear for me!" he exclaimed. "See these brawny arms! With these, and my good steed and riding whip, I do not fear; and you need not, my little, darling, timid bird! With you and happiness before me, that arm must be strong indeed that could stay my progress here. My heart has known but just one fear for two long years. I have sometimes been afraid," said he, playfully, "that the fairies would mistake you for their queen, and take you from my arms."

"They would find out their mistake quickly enough; so do not be alarmed, Edward," said she. "But you see that monitor in the corner, do you? It will soon strike seven. You heard father tell us to keep good time, didn't you?"

"Yes," he said; "but he meant that we must be good while we were up, didn't he?"

"You know very well what he meant," said she ; " but, if you don't stop teasing, I shall have to play, ' Poor, broken heart ! it was well that she died ! ' You know that always makes you feel sad."

"No, no, Alice ! don't do that ! But play one by way of introduction. Play, 'Thou, thou knowest that I love thee.'"

She complied, and seated herself at the piano. She ran her fingers gracefully over the keys — sang and played an accompaniment with taste and skill.

"There, now ; are you sober ? If not, I will play, ' Farewell, peaceful cottage ! farewell, happy home ! ' "

"I thank you ; that will do, love," said he. "I would rather hear you talk than sing the rest of the evening. If you will only speak the words I wish you to, you will make me the happiest man in the wide, wide world. You may repeat the first line of that song, if you will let me apply it and promise to abide by my application."

"Well, let me hear you apply it."

"O, I would have you bid farewell to this, your happy home, and come with me to a happier one."

"Shall I go on," said she, with a roguish smile, "and repeat the next line, 'I leave thee forever' ?"

"O, no ! Could you speak those cruel words to me, Alice ?"

"No, Edward ; you know I could not from the heart ; and I fear I cannot say the first just at present, we are so very young. I am nothing but a child, you know, and have never had the care of any thing. You would bring me back again, I fear, if you took me now ; and, now that I have left school, I am taking lessons of mamma in the

culinary department. Edward," she said, earnestly, "if ever I leave this for another home, I desire to make it a happy one—a home where you will enjoy more happiness even than you now anticipate."

"This is your decision, then, dear Alice? I came here fully resolved not to leave until I had gained a promise of your hand at a very early day; but I am again doomed to disappointment. You know not how impatient I have grown. My home is distasteful to me. I have almost longed to grasp the wheel of Time, to hasten the welcome day when I could say, 'My own, and only mine!' O, do not send me back!" said he, taking her hand gently and looking pleadingly up into her eyes. "O, do not send me back without that promise! for I need you, Alice. Say, will you not be mine, mine, soon? Talk not of youth and inexperience: you are all I ask or wish. Have I not wealth? It is a dear companion for my lonely hours, a second self, I want, and not a cook—a sweet, domestic hearth, a cherished wife, dearer to me than life; and you alone, dear idol of my heart, can fill that place."

Whatever further objections Alice might have made the ardent and eloquent young man was able to overcome; for, before he retired that night, he had won the promise of a bride before another month.

CHAPTER II.

FRANK THOMPSON.—HIS GRIEF AND DISAPPOINTMENT.—HE RESOLVES TO FOLLOW THE SEA.

THERE was a great commotion in the village church next day, when Farmer May and wife walked up the broad aisle, followed by their daughter and a strange young man. The old ladies looked over their glasses, nudged their next neighbors, and winked ; the young ladies smiled ; and the young gentlemen looked up cautiously from under their eyebrows, and caught a glimpse now and then when they could do so unobserved. They very wisely concluded that this must be the "beau" of whom rumor had been whispering so long.

The fact was, Edward Lee belonged to a neighboring town. He had met with Alice while visiting her friends in his vicinity ; had corresponded with her ; and, for the last few months, had been permitted by the father to visit her ; but this was the first time they had been seen together in public. Directly in front of them, in the side aisle, was the pew of Mr. Thompson, whose youngest son, Frank, had been a constant friend and playmate of Alice May.

From her earliest days she had been looked upon with mingled pride and pleasure by the family as the future wife of their beloved son ; indeed, they had never doubted the fact. For had they not played together in childhood, studied their lessons together from the same book, rode and walked together in their riper years ? Yes ; no one could deny this ; for in the days of their childhood they had called each other " brother " and " sister ; " but for several years that cognomen had been used by Alice only, Frank always saying " Allie," or " Alice," in the softest possible tone. She had often playfully told him he was ashamed to own her for his sister now that he had come to years of discretion, which only caused the bashful boy to blush and stammer out, " Dear Alice, do you really wish you were my sister ? " " To be sure I do ; I should dearly love a brother who could always be with me." That little sentence, although spoken by a lovely, happy girl, and in the sweetest, softest tones, grated cold and harsh on the lover's ear.

For a long time he had acknowledged to himself a warmer and stronger affection for her than that of a brother for a sister, and he would have fallen at her feet and confessed his love ; but the conviction, strong and stern, came rushing over him that hers was a *sister's* love, and nothing more, whilst he had wildly, madly worshipped her.

Many times he had essayed to tell her of his love ; but his lips were mute ; the very intensity of his feelings but hid it from her ; and frequently the innocent girl had

sighed as she thought of his altered demeanor towards herself. It was true, she had always loved him with a sister's love and treated him with a sister's respect and confidence; in the innocence of her heart, she had never dreamed that a nearer tie could exist between them. She was entirely ignorant of the causes which had conspired to make this change in her friend's appearance; of late, when they met, he had been more sad and silent than ever, and it had grieved her much. "O that he were my brother!" she thought; "for then I could find out his troubles, and give him my sympathy, if nothing more."

Thus stood the case between them on that Sabbath morn. But once, and only once, during the service, she raised her eyes to his face, as if to read his approbation of her choice. This was the first great secret she had kept from him; how would he like this want of confidence? She had often longed to tell him all; but then she never could; her lips refused to utter the praise of her affianced lover. "He can but like him when he sees him," had been the language of her heart. But now the trying ordeal had been passed through; and she, — what would she not have given to know the verdict of her friend and long-adopted brother? But now he sees her not — his head is bowed. It is well for thee, sweet Alice May, that thou canst not raise the veil; it is well thou canst not look into the heart of him who has been the dear companion of thy sports, the sharer of thy childhood's joys and sorrows; it is well thou canst not see the storm that is raging. In that calm, placid soul there burns a flame

which time will never quench nor dark adversity extinguish. Better, O, yes, better for him and thee, if he had spoken his love long years ago ; for then thou mightst have loved him even as thou dost thy own betrothed. O, mayst thou never know the pangs which he has felt for the last half hour !

Slowly and silently had grown the web of love ; strongly and firmly it had bound each fibre of his soul to hers ; all his brightest and best affections he had given to her ; nay, he has taken to his heart an idol, and " worshipped at an earthly shrine." Long, weary months he has tried to tear that image from his heart. His fears had told him that it must be so ; but Hope had whispered in the silent chambers of his soul, " She will be thine ! " and he had listened to her siren voice. But now it is hushed ; her lamp is quenched ; and O, how cold, and dark, and dreary looks the lonely way, and all is night ! How like a mighty, rushing avalanche the truth breaks in upon his mind ! Even from his boyhood's earliest day he has been building huge, glittering pyramids of future happiness, whose lofty heights reached almost to the skies ; but now they are shaken from base to summit, and in one short hour have crumbled and fallen back to dust from whence they came. " Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," said the Teacher ; " and him only shalt thou serve." These words recalled the wandering, sinking spirit of the youth ; and he mentally exclaimed, " Against thee, and thee only, O Lord, have I sinned ; and how fearfully am I punished for this, my first idolatry ! "

Mechanically he leaves the church ; at home he pleads indisposition, and retires to the solitude of his own room ; he struggles long and manfully with his disappointed hopes. What passed in the solemn stillness of that chamber is known alone to "Him who seeth in secret." But now he has risen up, and is pacing the floor with rapid steps ; then, stopping suddenly, he sadly exclaimed, "It is over now ; farewell, bright dream of happiness ! farewell, dear playmate, sister, friend, my native land ! and thou too, dearest home, farewell ! Mother, — dear, sainted mother, — come comfort and bless thy sorrowing child, and give me strength to say farewell to her, that she may never know the blight that has fallen on my heart ; no, let the secret perish in my tomb."

CHAPTER III.

THE SURPRISE AND WONDER OF THE GOOD PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE OF A——. — DESCRIPTION OF THE WEDDING OF EDWARD LEE AND ALICE MAY.

AND now the little village of A—— is thrown into intense excitement. "Frank Thompson has gone to sea!"

"You don't say so!" said one. "What! gone? actually gone? When did he go, and what for?"

"That's it," said many voices; "nobody knows."

"Dear me!" exclaimed aunt Mercy. "I wonder what won't turn up next. Some foolish love scrape, I dare say. Well, well, I wonder what on airth it could be," said she, looking straight at Alice, for she had half guessed the truth.

Uncle Jim said nothing; for he remembered away back in his youth that he had learned the saddest, hardest lesson of his life: he had learned that "delays were dangerous" in love affairs as well as in the sterner duties of life, and his heart grew sad in view of the probability of his surmises.

For a short time nothing was talked or thought of in the village but the strange occurrence. Much time was

spent in guessing and surmising : there was a mystery, a mighty secret, somewhere ; and the good people felt injured — wronged. They were determined to find out why Frank went to sea so suddenly ; but the secret is safe in the bosom of its owner, away out upon the " deep-blue sea." As usual, the excitement died away rapidly, and the waves of life once more rolled smoothly on ; but they were not long allowed to remain unruffled, for " something " was going on at Farmer May's. Large bundles had been sent from Mr. Steele's store, among which were many pounds of cotton batting, and that was proof positive that there was " something to pay ; " and consequently it had to be looked into at the next tea party, which uncle Jim thought was got up for the occasion.

" Alice May is going to be married," said Mrs. Flint, " as true as the world."

" You don't say so ! " exclaimed Mrs. Meed.

" But I do, though. It is foolish enough for folks to be so terrible secret about every thing. I do believe, if the Mays were going to die, they wouldn't want any body to know it."

" That's a fact," said Mrs. Forbes. " But it ain't no use, though ; for ' murder will out,' as my George says. Have you heard the particulars, Mrs. Flint ? "

" O, no, indeed, Mrs. Forbes ; I haven't heard any thing at all about it."

" How did you learn the fact," said Mrs. Wright, " that she was to be married ? "

" O, Mr. Steele told his wife, and she told Mrs. Fay ;

Mrs. Fay mentioned it to her husband ; he told Mr. Rich ; Mr. Rich told my husband ; and he told me. There ; ain't that straight enough ? ”

“ Mr. Steele said that Alice May was going to be married, did he ? ” said Mrs. Wright, firmly.

“ O, no ! no ! I was going to say that he said that Alice May's father had bought lots of things at his store, and he guessed Alice was going to be married.”

“ Well, I happen to know,” said Mrs. Wright, “ that he knows nothing at all about the affair ; and I know nothing, nor wish to know until the family themselves think proper to inform the public. I think our time and tongues might be better employed than in prying into our neighbors' secrets.”

This rebuke produced a general stir in the room. Several wise nods, and sly winks, and two or three low “ ahems ” were exchanged ; and then the matter dropped.

The very next Sabbath, however, Edward Lee and Alice May were published, much to the satisfaction of Mrs. Flint, Mrs. Forbes, Mrs. Meed, and Mrs. Steele, together with their husbands ; because, would not every body believe, after this, that they were very sagacious people ? Of course they would.

In the mean time preparations went briskly on at Farmer May's, under the judicious, quiet supervision of Mrs. May. Aunt Mercy, too, was busy as a bee : to be sure, when great piles of snowy dimity, damask tablecloths, bedspreads, &c., were brought home, she would say, “ Dear me ! what a piece of extravagance ! When I was a gal, people used to

weave such things." But, after all, she was a kind old lady, and watched over Alice with all the tender solicitude of a mother. "Poor child!" she used to say. "She don't know what she's a-coming to; she's no more fit to keep house than a baby."

Preparations were at length accomplished, and to the satisfaction of all parties: the ceremony was to be performed in the village church: a large company of friends and acquaintances were invited to dine with the family and take leave of the newly-married pair, who would start immediately after dinner for their new home.

The day at length dawned. Alice awoke at an early hour. So hurried had been the preparations for her nuptial day she had scarce had time for a moment's reflection; but now memory is busy with the past, and expectation, with eager haste, is stretching forward to grasp the future. She had much to leave—a mother's constant love and sympathy, a doting father's care. Did she falter when she thought of this? O, no; she could cheerfully resign them all for the sake of him, her beloved, chosen one. Her heart was full of love and gratitude to Heaven for all the blessings and mercies of the past and for the happy prospects of the future.

And, now that the hour has arrived, the village bell sends forth its merry, joyous peals, and men and maidens all hasten to witness the novel scene; for a marriage in a church was then no common occurrence. All acknowledged they were a noble, happy-looking pair; and prayers went forth from many hearts that a union solemnized under such

bright and cheerful prospects might end in a happy life. Never had the little village of A—— seen so great a display. Many were invited to partake of the festivities of the day who did not expect it in the least. "I have but one to marry off," said Farmer May. "Let it be a joyful day to all."

But now the time of parting is at hand. Farewells are spoken, mementoes are bestowed, among which is a large and elegantly bound Bible from uncle Jim. His lip trembled when he said, "Take this for your guide, and you never will regret this union. May God bless you both!" Aunt Mercy ejaculated a fervent "Amen," and wiped her eyes on the corner of her clean checked apron.

The parting between the parents and child was touching indeed. The father threw his arms wide apart to receive his daughter, who was now for the first time to place herself in another's care. He speaks not his blessing aloud; it was heard alone in heaven. Tenderly kissing her, he hastily turned away. And now she has fallen into her mother's arms: for a few moments she nestled there, as if fearing to leave the refuge of her tender care: she felt the beating of that devoted heart. "How truly that heart has ever beat for me!" she thought. "O, shall I ever find another heart as true?"

She looked towards her husband: he reached his hand to her, and in a moment she was seated in the carriage. Smiling through her tears, she bade adieu to her early home.

"Can my Alice weep to-day?" said a tender voice;

and a manly arm was thrown around her slender form, gently drawing her to him.

She leaned upon his bosom and wept. "Forgive me, Edward, if I weep; for I am not really sad, and shall feel better soon," said she, trying to smile.

"And does my wife, my little wife, regret?" (This was the first time he had called her wife; and the silly little blushing thing buried her head deeper in his bosom.) "Look up," continued he, "look up, my own. Say, do you like your hiding-place?"

"Thou knowest that I love thee," said a confiding voice; "then how can I be sad?" Alice Lee raised her beaming, happy face to his. "The April showers are over," she said, with a smile. "You must be patient, love, if they should be frequent through this month; for you know the old adage, 'April showers bring forth May flowers;' and I'll try and not be very foolish."

"You are not foolish, Allie; although I cannot fully understand your feelings, having never known a father's watchfulness or a mother's love. You know my parents died when I was a child. I know that you have sacrificed much for me; and may I ever be to you all that your confiding heart expects!"

Edward Lee had chosen for his home a beautiful, romantic spot, and erected upon it a spacious and (for that place) elegant house; and, by the liberality of Mr. May and his own ingenuity, (for he was a cabinet maker,) it was tastefully and elegantly furnished. The piano had been conveyed thither; and, as it was the only one in the town

of W——, it was quite an object of attraction. Many of the large rooms were carpeted : every thing around the place bespoke order, taste, and a sufficient share of wealth ; for Mr. Lee had inherited an estate from his father, and had added to it by his own industry and economy. Especially for the last two years he had been practising both these virtues. "The home of Alice Lee shall be worthy of her," he thought ; and he was both proud and happy to offer her a home which, in outward attractions, was far superior to the one she had left.

"We are here at last," said he, joyfully, as he sprang upon the ground. "Come, Mrs. Lee, I shall now have the pleasure of introducing you to some old friends, and some new ones too."

The little wife was pleased with every arrangement and admired every thing she saw. She met her husband's friends in that cordial, unassuming way, so peculiarly her own, which had won her so much love in her girlhood's home.

Among the articles of Mr. Lee's manufacture was an elegant sideboard. Mrs. Lee looked at it with some surprise.

"You do not admire this," said he, "do you ?"

"O, yes ; certainly ; it is beautiful indeed ; but I am a little surprised, for I thought you were opposed to the use of spirits," stammered the young wife.

"So I am ; but it would hardly be treating our friends politely to dispense entirely with such things at present, especially, in such an establishment as this ; at any rate, when reputation is at stake," said he.

Mrs. Lee felt a strong inclination to differ from her husband, and, by the power of argument and persuasion, to remove at once the obnoxious article ; for, to her eye, it was obnoxious to the last degree. Her father had long since abandoned the custom of using spirits except at weddings and on other great occasions ; and she remembered often to have heard him say, " Cursed is he who putteth the cup to his neighbor's lips ; " but she allowed the power of fashion and her love of peace to triumph over the still small voice of conscience. She knew the custom was followed by many respectable and pious people, and even by ministers of the cross ; but the example of an indulgent father, and the precepts of a pure, spiritually-minded mother were strong and fresh in her soul ; and it was with many fears and great reluctance that she saw the sparkling cup set before their guests.

And now the wily enemy has crept into this earthly paradise : a little, obscure niche, a secret hiding-place, is all he now can gain. Will he be content ? Or will he, like a skilful general, mature his plans and take the citadel ? All this the sequel will unfold.

For several days Mrs. Lee was scarcely alone with her husband until a late hour. " But these calls," said she, " will soon be over ; and then what delightful evenings we shall enjoy ! " In this she was not disappointed : their evenings were mostly passed in reading : now and then they returned calls : letters of congratulation were received and answered ; and joyfully the wheels of Time moved onward.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR CLUB NIGHT, OR A PEEP INTO THE PLEASANT PARLOR OF EDWARD LEE.

FOUR weeks have passed since the bridal day ; and now let us take a peep into the sitting room. A small, round table stands in the centre, upon which are the various periodicals of the day, a few bound volumes, and a work-box. Every thing around the room wears the air of comfort and cheerfulness : the piano is open, and Mrs. Lee is seated before it, intently examining a new piece of music. So deeply is she engaged that she hears not the stealthy step of her husband until he stands behind her and gently touches her shoulder. Starting quickly up, and discovering who the intruder was, she laughingly exclaimed, " You rogue ! How you frightened me ! "

" Frightened again ! " said he, catching her up in his arms and walking rapidly across the room two or three times. Then, seating her on his knee, he whispered, " Are you frightened now, Allie dear ? If you are, you must get over it quickly ; for this is our club night. "

A shade of disappointment spread over the happy face

of the young wife. "Your club night, Edward? I never heard any thing about it before. What is it?"

"O, haven't you?" said he. "It is a literary concern: we meet once a month: all the first men in town, and some from the village, belong to it."

"Does our minister belong to it?"

"O, no; his other duties probably interfere. But I will not stay out late," he said, kissing her; "and you will have time to practise your new music."

The little wife tried to look cheerful and satisfied; but it was all in vain. Her voice sounded strange even to herself when she said, "Good by, Edward!"

Her husband read her feelings in her looks, and hesitated for a moment.

O Alice, that might have been a precious moment to thee hadst thou faithfully and fearlessly performed the duty of a wife, and poured forth, in strains of love and eloquence, the feelings of thine own pure heart. You might have saved your loved one from the power of future evil.

Edward Lee hesitated for a moment only. "Pshaw!" thought he; "it wouldn't do to stop now; they will all make fun of me. I'll go a few times more, and then get an excuse."

A few tears dropped upon the paper Mrs. Lee was trying to read. "How foolish I am," she thought, "to let such things disturb me! There can't be any thing wrong about these clubs — this one at least."

But her tears would fall; and she felt sad. Her father

never approved of such associations ; and she never dreamed that her husband did. She had been taken by surprise, and hardly knew what to say, or whether to say any thing.

“O, how selfish he must think me, to wish him to stay at home all the time ! I must be more guarded in future,” she thought, as she seated herself at the piano again.

CHAPTER V.

THREE YEARS LATER. — A VISIT TO THE SAME ROOM, OR THE FOUNTAIN OF A MOTHER'S LOVE DISCLOSED. — THE FIRST SAD HOUR.

THREE years have passed away since our introduction to the drawing room of Edward Lee. So happily have they passed that their footsteps can scarcely be traced. On this night (we'll imagine it was the same evening) the table stands in the centre of the room; the piano is open, and several pieces of music are lying upon it, as if some one had recently left it.

And Alice Lee is there, looking fresher, and fairer, if any thing, than she did on our last visit. Now she is seated at the table, gazing lovingly upon an infant which lies in her lap: a pair of white, chubby arms are stretched out; and a little, cooing, birdlike voice sends a thrill of rapture through her heart.

"Three years ago to-night," she said, "sweet, little, cooing bird, I was a maiden free. Three years ago to-morrow another fate was linked to mine; and then I thought my cup of happiness was full. Then, precious one! I did not know a mother's love. Two years ago, another pure and

heavenly joy unfolded to my rapt, admiring gaze, the fountains of a mother's love. And thou, my precious dove, six months ago, didst fold thy tiny wings and light upon my breast ; and now my cup of happiness is full."

Ere the little one is laid in the cradle Edward Lee has returned, but not with his wonted cheerfulness. Mrs. Lee made several ineffectual attempts to converse.

"Is my husband sick?" at length she said, in an anxious tone.

"O, no," he replied, rousing up a little. "I have got a fit of the blues to-night ; that's all."

"Come with me, then," she said, laughingly. "I have a sovereign remedy for that." And she led the way to an adjoining room. Then, taking him playfully by the arm, she led him to the crib and bade him look on her sleeping child. Its golden curls had fallen like sunlight around her fair, happy face ; one little hand was thrown gracefully over them. The mother gently put away the beautiful locks and softly kissed the sleeping child.

"Is it not a lovely sight?" said she.

"It is, indeed," answered her husband, as he threw his arm around her and tenderly kissed her cheek.

"O Edward!" she exclaimed, starting back with a look of sorrow and offended dignity ; "you have been drinking brandy! You told me you would never, never taste any thing stronger than wine."

His eye drooped, and his cheek was covered with the blush of shame ; but it quickly passed, and a gloomy look settled on his brow. A brief half hour passed by ; but it

seemed a long, long time to the unhappy pair. It was the first half hour they had ever spent in coldness and silence such as this. A terrible incubus seemed resting on their souls. Both would have given worlds to break the spell. The fact that he was degraded in the eyes of his wife gave him no disposition to explain. It was true, he had drunk brandy; for his physician told him he needed a stimulus, and he felt justified in so doing. His unhappy wife saw that she had spoken too hastily; but for a little time her imagination wandered into the dim shadows of the future, and brought back images so dark and terrible that she felt unable to move or speak.

But now a little hand is fluttering in the cradle: mechanically she takes her seat by it and gently rocks it. And now her thoughts are turned once more into their own loving channel. She blushes to think that fear and doubt had, for a moment, found a resting-place in her heart. Timidly raising her eyes to her husband, she felt guilty before him. "He be a drunkard!" she thought. "O my God! what put the horrid thought into my head? It cannot, cannot be! I'll go to him: perhaps he will forgive me."

In a moment she was in his arms and her weeping head was laid upon his shoulder. "Forgive!" she whispered, sobbing.

"For what?" he asked. "It is I who should ask forgiveness. I should have told you all at first." And then he told her why he drank, kissing away the falling tears; and happiness came back again.

Not for the gold of California's mines, not for a world, not for a thousand worlds should one take the fearful responsibility of attempting to cure the ills of the body with that dangerous drink ; for in its bosom are hidden the fiery darts of hell, and deadly serpents hiss beneath its sparkling surface. Could the tears which have been wrung from crushed and breaking hearts be gathered up in one vast reservoir, the briny liquid would be deep enough to swallow up those fiends in human form who for the sake of gold have turned the staff of life, the bread which should be fed to hungry, starving souls, into the most destructive, damning, wasting scourge which ever cursed the world. Well might an angel weep over this, the second fall. Who shall redeem the world from this dreadful scourge ?

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH THE FOUR CHILDREN OF MR. LEE ARE INTRODUCED TO THE
READER. — THEIR PLEASANT VISITS TO GRANDPAPA MAY'S. — AUNT
MERCY'S DEATH. — CONTINUED PROSPERITY OF MR. LEE.

FIVE years more have fled ; they have been fraught with as many joys as usually fall to the lot of mortals here. A few dark spots have been found upon the page of life ; but when looked upon by Mr. and Mrs. Lee from the centre of their own domestic paradise, and compared with the lights and blessings which have been scattered around their pathway, they had dwindled into insignificance.

Three buds had blossomed in their bower ; and one, a tiny bud, was just unfolding to their gaze. Nellie, the eldest, was a bright, lovely child of seven years ; the dark-eyed, fairhaired James is a little more than five ; the little roundfaced, roguish-looking Fred is three ; and cunning little Susie is a babe, a few weeks old.

Three times a year they all go home to Farmer May's. O, those were happy times !

That was a pleasant group which might be seen on those

important days ; for grandpa always left his work, and devoted himself entirely to the little folks, as he called them. Recently, in summer, he might have been seen under the shade of a spreading tree, seated on a low bench, with two or three scampering, mischief-loving, brighteyed children playing around him. Jamie, the quiet little Jamie, would hide away in the shelter of grandpa's arms and send forth joyous peals of laughter to see his sister and little brother frolic about on the grass ; and grandpa, too, sometimes joined in their noisy shouts. And then, with the two boys upon his knees and the white arms of Nellie wound affectionately round his neck, he would sit and tell them stories to keep them from their mother.

"Poor thing!" he would say to his wife. "She don't look so well as she used to. I'm afraid these noisy youngsters will be too much for her."

"I wish she would let us keep one or two of them for a little time," said Mrs. May.

"I wish so too," would be the grave rejoinder ; "but she thinks she cannot spare us one."

O, what peaceful, calm, and happy days to Alice Lee were those spent in her childhood's home, surrounded by her parents and children ! Aunt Mercy and uncle Jim, too, — how young and bright they looked on those holidays ! But ere their last sad visit home Death had been there ; and dear, good aunt Mercy had gone to her final resting-place.

She had not forgotten the children in her last hours :

her little property was divided equally between them ; not to be touched, however, until they became of age. "Who knows," said she, "but they will need it bad enough by that time?"

To Alice she bequeathed her bedding. "Tell her," she said, "it may save her some stitches, if nothing more." Alice wept when she received this last token of her aunt's care and affection. The children put aside their playthings, and listened in silent sadness to the story of her death, and to many little anecdotes of the dead, which had often been heard before, but were now doubly interesting.

But the duties of Mrs. Lee were now so numerous that she had but little time to weep ; for, with the help of one large girl and one little one to assist in tending the baby, she took not only the entire management of her household affairs, (and of late they had so much company and so many dinner parties that this alone was no small task,) but, in addition to this, she attended wholly to the education of her children. Her ingenuity was constantly taxed to so blend their studies with amusement and exercise as not to interfere with their physical development. Nellie had already taken music lessons ; and her little fingers, from their graceful, rapid movements, gave promise of great skill.

The tender, careful mother, had already begun to look pale and thin, and frequently, of late, had suffered with a nervous headache ; but her heart was light and her voice joyous. Still Providence had smiled upon all their efforts,

and the choicest blessings of Heaven had been showered plentifully upon them.

On the opposite side of the street, and only a few rods from the house, might be seen a handsome frame building, with the name of "Edward Lee, Furniture and Coffin Manufactory," painted in large, gilt letters; and over the office door, in smaller ones, "Edward Lee, Justice of the Peace."

Several large dwelling houses, and quite a number of small ones, have been erected since our first visit here; indeed, the place has now become one of those pleasant, thrifty villages which are so numerous in our enterprising towns.

And now a fine, large, brick building is being erected, the first that was ever built in the town. It is to be a tavern, connected with which will be a dry goods store. It was a matter of no small rejoicing to all the inhabitants of the town of W——, for hitherto they had been obliged to resort to the neighboring villages to make all their purchases. But as every thing has a beginning and end, so at length the new store was completed.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW TAVERN COMPLETED AND DULY OPENED. — PLEASANT FAMILY SCENE. — THE DINNER PARTY, AND INTRODUCTION OF SQUIRE HAYNES. — MR. LEE INTOXICATED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

THE new tavern and store were duly opened.

"Wife," said Mr. Lee, one evening shortly after, as he tossed little Sue high up in the air, and looked smilingly down upon little Fred, who was making unsuccessful attempts to climb up into papa's lap, — "wife," said he, "I have called on the new tavern keeper to-day ; he and his wife will dine with us to-morrow. Here is ten dollars. I will send Jacob to you in the morning, and you may get whatever you please for dinner, provided, of course, that it is something very nice. Let it be something a little extra for this occasion, for Squire Haynes is not much used to country fare."

"Pray," said his wife, laughing, "who may this honorable gentleman be, that you so soon extend your hospitality to him ? and where does he come from, that he has never had the advantages of country living ?"

"Two questions at once," said Mr. Lee, as he gave the baby another toss, and handed her to her mother, and caught little Freddie in his arms,—"two questions at once. Well, I will try and answer them. To the first, I would say that he is Squire Haynes, and has been a member of our club for two or three years. To the second, that he has been living in B——, where he has been practising law, until he has become entirely sick and tired of the cunning and intrigue which are constantly practised in that profession."

"Then you think he is more honest than his profession?" said she, gayly laughing at his enthusiasm.

"To be sure. I think him the personification of honor itself."

Edward Lee gave his wife a look of approbation as he seated himself and friends around the tastefully arranged and bountifully supplied dinner table next day; yet her face was a little sad.

"Can we afford such extra expenditures?" she had often thought during the forenoon. Her husband had told her he could; but might he not be mistaken? And then the unusual exertion she had been obliged to make in preparing had helped to depress her spirits. Her fatigue and depression had made her babe worrisome; and she would have preferred almost any other place to the one she occupied at the table.

She was not so well pleased with the squire as her husband; and his wife she regarded as a mere butterfly of fashion.

From the first moment of her introduction to him, a strange, indefinable sensation of repulsion had crept into her bosom, as new to her as it was unexpected ; but he was her husband's friend and guest, and must be cheerfully received and cordially entertained, although it might cost her a great effort to do so.

Squire Haynes was a man of medium height and of sandy complexion, a great admirer of self, very loquacious, but polite and affable in his appearance. He was a keen observer of men and things ; in a word, he was one of those artful, cruel characters who steadily and cautiously mature their plans, and leave no means untried to compass their own selfish ends. He was poor, although thought to be rich ; several thousands came into his possession with an accomplished city heiress ; but in a few years their extravagance, together with the wine cup and gaming table, left them a mere pittance of their ample fortune. Could you look into the dark chambers of his blacker soul, you would find written there, "By deception and fraud, I build my fortune on the ruin of Edward Lee."

Knowing that Providence had smiled upon his victim, the demon of envy had breathed upon his soul, and his wicked heart was filled with schemes and plots to bring about his ruin, and gloat himself upon the tears, and groans, and agonizing prayers of trusting, loving woman, sacrificed ; and childhood, lovely, innocent, and pure, cursed with a curse tenfold more bitter than that which falls upon the orphan of the poor.

Well might Humanity hide her indignant face and blush

with bitter scorn and shame when looked upon by such a man as this. O, one might almost think the God of justice slain because he did not strike the scheming villain dead. But no ; the mighty Judge still lives. Then let the wily schemer pause.

Foul wretch, beware ! for the same snare that lays your victims in the dust, and the same cord that binds them down to degradation, shall, by the God of justice, be intertwined about the fibres of your own black soul, and drag you down, down to the lowest, foulest depths of woe.

This is a true picture of the man and his hidden motives who now sits conversing so fluently at the table. His knowledge is versatile, his figure beautiful, his language eloquent.

Mr. Lee was charmed with his conversation. Mrs. Lee could not but listen with interest, and was inclined to think she must be mistaken in her preconceived opinion.

After dinner a bottle of something was passed around the table. It might have been wine or it might not ; but Mrs. Lee noticed with a palpitating heart that her husband's voice sounded strangely loud and coarse. When he returned to the parlor his face was so flushed and his appearance so changed that the truth, like an electric flash, sent a pang of horror through her aching heart. But her guest was as calm as he was before dinner ; and in his face she detected a look so peculiar that for a moment her gaze was riveted upon him, and the same mysterious, loathing sensation crept over her.

"Let us have some music, ladies," said the squire with one of his blindest smiles.

Mrs. Haynes, with many apologies, took her seat at the piano and played and sang several fashionable songs. Edward Lee applauded her in such a coarse, boisterous manner as to cause even the children to look up in astonishment.

"Mrs. Lee," said the squire, putting his hand caressingly on the head of Nellie, "I understand you have a prodigy of music here. I trust we shall have the pleasure of hearing her play and sing before we leave."

"Yes, give 'em some!" said the now half-intoxicated father.

The sensitive child looked at her father in blank amazement and trembled from head to foot. Her mother, fearing and dreading to hear her husband speak again, and knowing the power of music over the child, stepped to the instrument and commenced playing an old, familiar tune. In a moment the child was at her side; the mother whispered in her ear, and she commenced, in a sweet, childish voice, "Home, sweet home;" and, for a girl of but eight years, it was well performed.

"That is a bright, interesting child of yours," said Squire Haynes.

"Yes," said the father; "she's one of 'em!"

Edward Lee sat silent and moody after the departure of his guests, and retired at an early hour. And now the weary, sorrowing wife and mother is seated alone in the same room where she has enjoyed so much of earthly bliss. The same comforts surround her; many luxuries have been added to them; but she sees them not. Her

hands are pressed convulsively over her eyes, as if to hide forever from her soul the dreadful truth that like a thunderbolt has fallen so suddenly upon her ; an expression of unutterable suffering is resting on her deathlike features. Clasp ing her hands wildly together, and raising her swollen eyes to heaven, her pale lips opened for a moment, as if she would seek support from that never-failing fount.

"Not there!" she murmured with a husky voice, and again clasping her head, "not there! In the day of my prosperity I forgot to walk in the precepts of my father's God ; and now will he not laugh at my calamity and mock when my fear cometh? Mother! O my mother! could I but lay this aching head upon thy breast and feel my father's protecting arms around me, then I could rest. But now," she said, faintly, as she gazed wildly and fearfully around the room,—"O my God! I am going mad! yes, mad!" she exclaimed, in a voice of agony. "My children! O my babe!"

With a mother's instinct she rushed to the cradle and raised her infant in her arms: it awoke and smiled upon her—how like an angel's smile! It bade the troubled waters of her soul be still, and sent a ray of light and trust into its mother's heart, as with its little voice it says, as plainly as it can, "I must be fed!"

And now how calm, but sad, that mother's brow as she gazes on her child! "I thank thee, O my God," she says, "that thou hast kept me from a maniac's fate ; and now, for their dear sakes, spare, O, spare their father to them! Save him and us, I implore thee, this deep reproach! O,

keep us from the suffering and misery which fall on the drunkard's home ! ”

Thy prayer is heard, poor, injured, sorrowing woman ; but the enemy is already in the camp, and the strongholds of the citadel are already in his power. The dreadful fiat has gone forth, and thou and thine must be tried in the furnace of affliction ; but, if thou art not found wanting, thou shalt come forth purified from thy dross and receive on earth the reward of the faithful, and in heaven a never-fading crown of everlasting joy. Rest not upon thine own strength, for it is weakness ; lean not upon an earthly arm, but trust alone in God, and thou art safe.

With her babe pressed closely to her bosom, the exhausted mother retired to rest.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. LEE'S MORTIFICATION.—HIS GOOD RESOLUTIONS ALL FRUSTRATED BY THE ARTFUL, DESIGNING SQUIRE.—THE DEMON OF INTERFERENCE SLOWLY BUT SURELY CREEPS INTO THIS HAPPY HOME; AND LO, HOW GREAT THE CHANGE!

MR. LEE awoke the next morning with a confused and very indistinct recollection of the adventure of the previous day. "I have been dreaming," said he to himself; "yes, it must be that. What a horrid dream!"

Mrs. Lee had not yet awoke; but her disturbed breathing and frequent sobs arrested his attention. Her pale, suffering face spoke volumes. For a moment the strong man bowed himself, weak and helpless as the infant by his side. A film seemed gathering over his eye. So new was this faintness to him that death and eternity were instantly in his thoughts. "Can this be death?" thought he, as he tried to lift his cold, powerless hands. "It is well. I shall be saved the mortification of meeting her again. How could I so forget myself and her! Curses on the drink! and many curses on my foolish weakness!"

But death does not always come at the bidding of the

wretched or the guilty; and Edward Lee soon found himself revived. With many self-accusations and good resolutions he hurried forth into the cool morning air, hoping, yet dreading, to meet the squire.

"I must apologize," thought he: "the confounded stuff! How came it to affect me so? He drank as many times as I did; but I don't believe it had the least effect upon him."

The squire joined him in his walk: "Good morning, Mr. Lee, good morning," said he, as he drew his arm within his own and commenced talking in his usual fluent style.

Mr. Lee saw that his friend was as cordial as ever, and felt himself at once reinstated in his former position.

"How did that brandy affect you yesterday, squire? It must have been unusually strong, for I confess it made me a little drunk."

"O, no," said the squire; "not a bit of it. It was stronger than you are used to having, that's a fact. I always get the best of every thing. I've got some of the nicest sherry you ever drank. Come in a moment,—it is but a step,—and taste of it."

Mr. Lee stammered out every excuse he could think of; but the wily squire would accept none.

"Why, I'm surprised, Lee; you are really almost a milk-and-water man. Why, my wife can stand under as much brandy as you any day."

That was enough. Satan could not have struck a more effectual blow, or one which could have annihilated his

good resolutions so entirely. He was sensitively alive to every thing in the form of ridicule. The squire had not studied his victim's character in vain; he knew all his weak, available points, and brought his battery to bear upon them. His first card had been played successfully — more so than he had expected — in regard to Lee; besides, he had thrown out many other tempting baits, and set many secret snares, among the honest, industrious townsmen.

We will not follow Squire Haynes and his deluded victim, lest we be swallowed up in indignation and disgust. We need not tell you that the wretched victim, as he felt the chains tightening about him, writhed in agony: but he had become as clay in the hands of the artful squire; and, like a skilful potter, he moulded him to suit his own nefarious schemes.

We will not attempt to speak of all the hopes which sprang up in the heart of Mrs. Lee, like morning flowers, to be cut down by the withering, blighting breath of disappointment.

Go to yon wreck and ask the mariner who clings with the grasp of death to the broken mast, with the angry billows swelling and dashing madly around him, as if they yearned to swallow up their victim: can he tell you how he feels? No. Then turn to the burning wreck and ask the frantic mother, as, pale and cold with fear, she clasps her infant to her heart, and clings with more than mortal energy to the last frail spar which points to the home

where the loved ones wait to welcome her. Behind are the raging flames, below huge monsters of the deep, waiting to swallow up her infant and herself. A little skiff draws near. Will it reach the wreck?

On every side she hears the cries of dying anguish: can she tell you how she feels? No. She can feel, — O, what a weight of woe! — but cannot speak it.

Then turn and ask the lovely, loving wife and devoted mother, whose days have rolled so smoothly on that scarce a ripple has been left on life's blue, smiling wave; the golden hues of prosperity and the sunlight of happiness have ever shone upon her path; the voice of affection has ever fallen like music from a golden harp upon her listening ear: can she tell you how much happiness her heart has felt? No. She is truly blessed, but cannot realize how great the debt of gratitude she owes to Heaven for gifts so rich as these.

Now, let the demon of intemperance, with slow and stealthy step, creep into this fair bower of peace, and breathe his loathsome, pestilential breath upon these human plants: they wither, fade, and die. The sweet affections of the husband and father are seared and blighted by the monster's scorching breath. How great the change!

But think you the wretched wife and children, as they feel stroke after stroke from the iron heel of intemperance sinking deep into their inmost souls, could tell you half their woe when they see their earthly hopes lie bleed-

ing in the dust, their earthly comforts wasting away, a husband and a father's love turned by the demon power into bitter hate, his manhood and his honor passing away? No; the task would be too great for them. One by one the dear delights of home have been laid waste; little by little their hearts have been made desolate.

CHAPTER IX.

A VISIT TO THE FAMILY FIVE YEARS LATER.—SCENE IN THE BAR ROOM.—MR. LEE GAMBLES IN A FIT OF INTOXICATION AND BEG-
GARS HIS FAMILY.

FIVE years have passed away since we took our leave of Mr. Lee, his lovely wife and children.

Knowing that in his youth he used that filthy, nauseous weed, tobacco, that in his manhood he tampered with the wine cup, and recollecting that we left him inside the gate that leads to destruction,—the squire's bar room,—we shall not be surprised if we find him there again.

But let us look in a moment on the dear ones at home. There has not been much alteration in the house or furniture excepting that which has been made by the finger of Time; but Mrs. Lee is sadly changed. Those who knew her not in her happier days might call her cold and indifferent; but, to those who knew her then, she wore a look of patient sorrow and resignation.

A puny, feeble infant now moans upon her breast; it is so frail and pure that a few more blasts of winter will

loose its hold on earth and waft it back to heaven. Through all these years of gloom she had labored on to give her children all the advantages of education in her power.

Nellie has grown tall ; but her face has lost its roundness, and her eye its former, joyous light. Jamie has grown more thoughtful than ever ; his eyes are brighter and larger ; and, as he sits poring over his books, you might see a bright-red spot on either cheek. Freddie, now nearly nine years of age, is as plump and rosy-looking as ever. Little Sue, inquisitive little Sue, has grown more quiet ; she loves to sit by the cradle and gaze upon her baby sister ; but, should you ask her where her father is, her eyes would instinctively seek the floor as she replied, " I guess he is at the store."

Let us seek him there. A light gleams brightly forth from the squire's bar room. Let us enter. It is rather trying to subject ourselves to such a confused medley of smells, — tobacco, rum, gin, brandy, — all mingled in one foul mass. Do you say you cannot enter ? We must ; for have we not an end in view ? We must look upon the bearded monster in his den, that our souls may know how much to loathe and despise the filthy keeper.

A small stove stands nearly in the centre of the room, and around it are seated two or three half-drunk, half-sober men, and on the bench some half a dozen more — some dozing, others swearing, and some joking ; but all, with the exception of one, are smoking.

The squire is not there ; like other fashionable people,

he does not like to do his dirtiest work. He has a man after his own heart ; and, when he gets his victims fairly initiated in the way to death, he hands them over to him.

Two or three pairs of legs are piled up on the top of the stove. "Take care there! G—d damn ye!" said Tom Flint. "My foot is cursed sore!"

"Damn your foot!" said Jake Pratt. "Keep it away there!"

"Go to h—ll!" said Tom, looking daggers at him.

"Give it to him!" said Peter Poor. "That's right ; give him Jesse! I would."

"No, I'll be d——d if you do!" said Jake, starting up in a rage, spitting on his hands, and shaking his fist, first at one and then at another. "Who in h—ll be you," said he, hissing through his grating teeth, "you little, d——d, dirty puppy? Give him some, would ye? I'd like to see ye do it, or any body that looks like ye," said he, doubling up his fist and making a plunge at him, which brought himself all down in a heap in one corner of the room.

"Ha! ha! ha! ha!" broke from every part of the room.

"Go to h—ll and be d——d, every one of ye!" said the crestfallen Jake, as he picked himself up and crawled away to the farthest corner of the room.

Edward Lee is not here ; but there is a pleasant parlor up stairs, and perhaps we shall find him there. It is there the squire invites his customers. Yes ; I hear his voice.

Even before we enter the same nauseous smell of tobacco smoke, brandy, &c., meets us. Here it is not so

highly concentrated as, indeed it is more refined than, the one below. They have every thing convenient here—counter, sideboard, decanters, wine glasses, punch bowls, and the very best Spanish cigars, &c.

For the last four years the squire has very generously tendered the use of this room to the club of which he was a member. How very magnanimous! Of course it was accepted: and now some eight or ten genteelly-dressed men are seated around a table upon which lay several packs of cards.

"I'm as dry as the devil!" said one. "Come, Lee; it's your turn to treat to-night."

"His turn?" said Mike Thompson. "I should like to know when it will be somebody's else turn."

"Well, never mind that," cried two or three voices; "never mind; he has got the shiners."

"I don't know about that," said Mr. Lee; "but my credit is good; is it not, squire?"

"Certainly, certainly," answered the squire, bowing politely. "What will you have, Mr. Lee?"

"O, I'll leave that for the gentlemen to decide. What should you like this evening, gentlemen?"

"Give us something that has got the tang to it," said one.

Mike Thompson was not a favorite with the squire, for the very good reason that he had not much money and no real estate. He was one of Mr. Lee's best workmen, however, and particular friend, and for that reason was tolerated. He had felt the squire's coldness, and grown a

little suspicious under it ; he had noticed this evening, as he had many times before, that the squire did not fill his own glass, managing so adroitly that the fact would not be noticed except by a close observer.

Now that the cups had been passed around three times the effects are distinctly visible : some have grown poor and timid, others rich and bold. Edward Lee belonged to the latter class.

"How much will you stake, squire ?" said he.

"Well," said the squire, "say fifty."

"Nonsense ! Say five hundred, and done with it," said Lee.

"That's too much ; fifty is more than I can afford ; and you know you have won almost every time to-night."

"Bah !" said Lee. "I'd as lief lose as win ; so down with your cash. I won't play with a cent less."

"Now is your time, squire," whispered the spirit of avarice ; "just such a time as you have been waiting for."

"Well," said the squire, after waiting until Mr. Lee became very much excited, "down with it, then, if you say so ; but, as neither of us have the cash, suppose I stake my establishment against your real estate."

"Go it !" said Lee, impatiently. "Only get ready to play some time to-night."

"Then I will draw up the instrument," said the squire ; "shall I ?"

"Go ahead !" screamed Lee.

"You understand the bargain, do you, gentlemen ?" said the squire.

"Yes! yes!" exclaimed all but Mike: he was more sober than the rest; and, having a strong friendship for Mr. Lee and his family, he tried to remonstrate with him. "Take my advice, Mr. Lee," said he, "and stop where you are."

"Go to the d——l with your advice!" said Lee, rubbing his hands and looking wild with excitement.

The squire happened to have some documents almost ready. Having been a lawyer, that was nothing strange, if Mike did say it was. Mr. Lee thought it was d——d lucky. Every thing was ready in a short time, and the game commenced.

Edward Lee played with the recklessness of a drunken man; he thought not of wife or children; nay, he had forgotten himself and his God.

The game is over; and they, the innocent and pure, are penniless beggars, thrown out upon the cold, cold world by the damning power of the intoxicating cup; and he, the poor, deluded victim, knows not the depth of poverty and degradation into which he has plunged himself and them.

"Put down a thousand!" he cried. "I swear I won't give it up so!"

"Have you money at interest," asked the squire.

"No; I'll be d——d if I have!"

"Well, then, it's no use to play if you've nothing to stake."

"It's a blasted lie!" said Lee, in a towering passion. "Who said I wasn't worth any thing? Who said I was a

beggar?" he exclaimed, wildly, as the words fell from many lips.

The squire read the document which conveyed all his real estate away; but he could not comprehend it at all, and loudly insisted on playing another game.

"Come, gentlemen," said the calm, cool, and calculating squire; "it is my turn to treat now." He well knew that another glass would calm the excitement of his victim; and then he very kindly assisted Mr. Lee to his own door and gazed around with a self-satisfied look.

"Pretty well done," thought he; "the fool swallowed my bait better than I expected;" and he grinned a horrid, satanic grin as he turned away.

It was one o'clock when Mr. Lee returned to his family.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the drunken man. "Edward Lee is a drunkard, is he?" and he stumbled along into the house. "Ha! ha! ha! and a beggar, too?" Then straightening himself up to his full height, as if greatly insulted and outraged, he said, fiercely, "Who said I was a drunkard or a beggar? It is false!" he groaned, "false as h-ll!"

His wild words fell with terrible significance upon the ear of Mrs. Lee: in all his ravings he had never spoken thus. It might be so: she knew that poverty must come; but, for the sake of those little ones, she hoped the blow might be delayed, if not evaded.

CHAPTER X.

THE GRIEF AND CONSTERNATION OF MR. LEE. — THE ADROITNESS
WITH WHICH THE SQUIRE MANAGED TO RETAIN HIS POWER OVER
HIS VICTIM.

THE sun was high in the heavens next day when Edward Lee awoke ; its rays were shining in through the frosted panes. He was sober now ; but the hateful words, "drunkard and beggar," still sounded in his ears.

He swallowed his breakfast in silence, and then hurried to the shop. "Mike," said he, "what, in time, did they mean last night by calling me a beggar?"

"They meant," said Mike, slowly and solemnly, "just what they said ; you are a beggar. Against my advice, you throw away every cent you owned, beggared yourself and family, gambling away every thing, even to this shop. Now I am at work for Squire Haynes ; he has been here this morning, and says he will hire you."

Edward Lee stood as if transfixed to the spot ; his eyes glared wildly, his pale lips quivered with emotion. "Has it come to this?" he exclaimed, as he clasped his hands upon his almost bursting head ; and, staggering back a few

steps, he fell, cold and lifeless, as if stricken by the hand of Death.

Mike did all he could to restore his fallen friend, and soon succeeded. Slowly he opened his eyes. How he longed to see the ground open beneath his feet, and hide him from the world, his family, and himself!

"O, don't stand there looking at me!" he said, in such evident distress that Mike could not help wiping his eyes. Whispering in his ear, the latter said, "But you do not think of giving up a cent of it, do you?"

Mr. Lee looked up with astonishment. "How can I help it?" he asked.

"Simply by owning up that you were drunk and gambled it away; that is all," answered Mike. "Don't let that skinflint have the first cent of it."

Mr. Lee walked into his counting room in a state of mind bordering on desperation. Will he let his false pride and perverted sense of honor prevent even justice to his family? Let us see.

He locked the door; and, taking a loaded pistol from his desk, he muttered, "I'd sooner die than proclaim myself a drunkard and gambler — yes, die by my own hand. O God! have mercy on my soul!" he groaned; for now death seemed so near that eternity and an offended God were staring him in the face.

Will he rush unbidden into the presence of Him he has defied? or will he meekly bow his head and drink the bitter cup his own hands have raised to his parched and burning lips? Will he flee from the dreadful precipice on

which he stands? or rush more madly on and plunge into its deep abyss? But lo, he weeps; bright visions of his virtuous days now slowly pass before him. He is thinking of his bridal day. Again a soft, white hand is pressed in his, and a fair, young, happy bride clings to his arm. And now his firstborn babe, his darling Nell, looks sweetly up and smiles upon him. His brow grows calm; his hand falls gently by his side.

"I'll do them justice yet," he said, vehemently. "Yes, I'll leave that cursed haunt of shame and be a man once more. These hands are strong enough to earn their daily bread. I'll go at once and confess my faults."

He turned the key; but lo, the squire, like a serpent as he is, comes crawling in. "Good morning, good morning, Mr. Lee. How do you feel about that affair last night?"

"What affair?" said Mr. Lee, coldly.

"Why," said the squire, "you cannot be ignorant of my meaning."

"There were a great many things that happened last night," answered Mr. Lee, tartly. "To which do you refer?"

"Why, I refer to your loss—your loss, sir. I hope you will not be offended with me; you know I was very loath to play; they will all tell you so."

"I was not aware that I had met with a loss until I heard of it this morning. You know I was drunk, Squire Haynes, and will not, of course, take advantage of me."

"Why, as to that, Mr. Lee, I did not call you drunk, nor did any of the gentlemen present. If the majority

say you were intoxicated, I will give you back the deed. I bind myself to do this, if you, on the other hand, agree to abide by their decision."

A written agreement was signed by both to that effect.

"How does that mortgage read?" said Mr. Lee.

"Step over—step over and read it," said the artful squire. "It will take but a moment."

O, could some strong hand of affection be laid on the arm of Edward Lee to hold him back, or could justice, at this moment, wind its sinewy arm around the neck of Squire Haynes, he might even now be saved. His measure of wickedness is not yet full; but his time will surely come. How pleasantly he talks to his foolish victim as arm in arm he leads him to his den once more! and when he sends him forth he is a different man. He has taken a glass or two just to steady his nerves; and all his good resolutions have melted like snow in a summer's sun.

"Come this evening," said the squire; "we will have that business settled; say at nine o'clock. I have an engagement till then."

He did not tell him that he wished time to convince the gentlemen that he, Edward Lee, justice of the peace, was not intoxicated the evening before, and also that he should use brandy as one of his very best arguments.

I need not say that the squire's persuasive eloquence prevailed on all but Mike to decide that his title was just and good. Strange as it may appear, his potent arguments and cogent reasonings satisfied Mr. Lee himself that the squire was not only an honorable man, but his very best

friend and adviser. He worked for him ; and to him he went with all his wants, which did not extend much farther than to quench the raging thirst that was burning up his soul. He allowed but a mere moiety of his earnings for the sustenance of his family. So great was his infatuation that he looked upon them as the guilty ones, and thought himself the most injured and misused man in the world.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ANGELS VISIT.—MR. LEE'S BRUTALITY TO HIS FAMILY.—
NELLIE'S WONDERFUL PRESENCE OF MIND.—THE MELANCHOLY
DEATH OF JAMIE.

HITHERTO the family had suffered mentally ; but now poverty — grinding, abject poverty — has come upon them. For a long time their wardrobe has not been replenished ; and now it is mean and scanty.

Let us look in upon them again : they are weeping now. One would have thought that long ere this the fountain of their tears would be dry or frozen by the scorn of the cold world. Those tears have not been wrung by want or cruelty ; but an angel from the skies has been there. He touched them with his beauteous wings as he took their infant in his arms and lovingly bore it away. "I will come again," he said.

"Let us rejoice, my beloved ones," said Mrs. Lee, "that our bird has flown to its own native skies before the temptation and sin of this earth had tainted its purity. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be his holy name.'"

But that voice,— can that be the sweet, cheerful voice of Alice Lee? O, how sadly it has changed! How like the mournful tones of a broken lute its music is scattered on the air!

Jamie, paler than ever, stands calmly gazing on the face of the dead. "Mother," he said, "you tell me sister is a spirit now that she lives in a spirit world; that there is no sin or sorrow there, no pain or death; and I would like to go there, mother; only you would be left. Do you think I shall go there soon? I feel so weak to-day, that, somehow, I feel as if I was going to die."

"Yes," thought his sorrowing mother, as she drew him tenderly to her breast, "thou art indeed passing away, my beautiful and noble boy. The blasts have blown too rudely upon thee, my heavenly-minded, precious one. Thy noble bearing and thy patient life,— O, how have they shone upon me in my darkest hours! It will be dark and dreary, dear one, when thou art gone."

"Mother," said the wailing boy, "you do not speak; you think I am going with little sister, don't you?"

"I cannot tell, my love; we must all wait our appointed time," said his mother, with forced calmness. "But your head is very, very hot: let me bathe it for you; and you must lie down; perhaps you will feel better to-morrow."

The boy shook his head. The angel had whispered to his soul; he heard the echo still. "I am going to die!" he thought.

Little Johnny is looking on in childish wonder. "What

made sissy die, mamma? Johnny sorry!" said the little fellow, trying to look solemn. "Sissy will come back again to see Johnny; won't she, mamma?"

But the conversation was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Lee. He looked upon the dead child coldly, and was in no way softened, for he hardly realized the spectacle. He had not been really sober since that fatal night when he went to the squire's to "fix up things," as he called it. He could not bear the reflections which came crowding into his mind when reason resumed its sway. Remorse, like a vulture, hovered over his head; and, when Manhood shone forth from his haggard eyes, she drove her bloody talons deep down into his sin-stained soul. Poor, cringing, suffering wretch! The doors of redemption and mercy are thrown wide open for thee: then why dost thou rush madly to the gates of death for relief? Blind, foolish man! In despair he cries, "Give me more drink—brandy—strong enough to drown this demon in my breast!"

He is more intoxicated than ever: he has quarrelled in the bar room; and now, as usual, he pours out his heaviest indignation and wrath upon his innocent family.

"Jim!" he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, "take this," handing him a quart bottle; "go over to the store and ask the squire for a quart of rum; tell him your mother is sick and wants it."

"But mother never drinks, and she is not sick either," said the boy.

"Shut up your prating to me and start along ! Do as I bid you, Jim, or I'll knock you through the side of the house ! D'ye hear ?"

"But, father," said the wife, "Jamie is sick ; he is quite feverish. Pray don't send him out to-night !"

"Mind your own blasted business ! You don't cheat me in that way," said he, rudely pushing her across the room. This was the first time he had ever raised his hand against his family. "I'll horsewhip you both," shouted he, "if he don't go !"

The child was growing stronger and stronger every moment. The Spirit of Truth had breathed upon him ; and he resolved to die rather than tell a falsehood. "I'm sick, father," he said, "and I know by my feelings here" (placing his hand on his head) "that I shall die soon ; and something tells me that I must not go to heaven with a lie in my mouth ; and I cannot go," he added, in a trembling voice.

"Then I swear I will whip you until you do !" said the enraged man, starting in pursuit of a whip.

"Don't say any thing, mother !" said the noble child ; "it will make it worse. He won't hurt me much. I can bear it ; for I know the angels are near me ; they will help me. Mother, don't speak !"

Yes, Jamie, the angels are with thee, and thy guardian angel will soon take thee to himself. But Nellie, — where is she ? The timid, but strongminded, loving Nellie, when she heard her father's threats, had quietly left the room ; but, as he returned again, she also enters. A change has come over her ; she is no longer timid and fearful, although

but fourteen years of age. She steps boldly up before him. Her cheek is flushed, it is true, and her breath comes hard and fast. Her slight form quivers with emotion, as, drawing herself proudly up and folding her arms firmly across her breast, she exclaimed, "Strike here!" in a voice of such fearful earnestness that her mother raised her weeping head in astonishment.

"Strike me! I can bear it. But touch *him* not. Beware!"

Her large, bright eyes flashed forth a world of rebuke; and, as she fixed them firmly on her father, he quailed beneath her gaze.

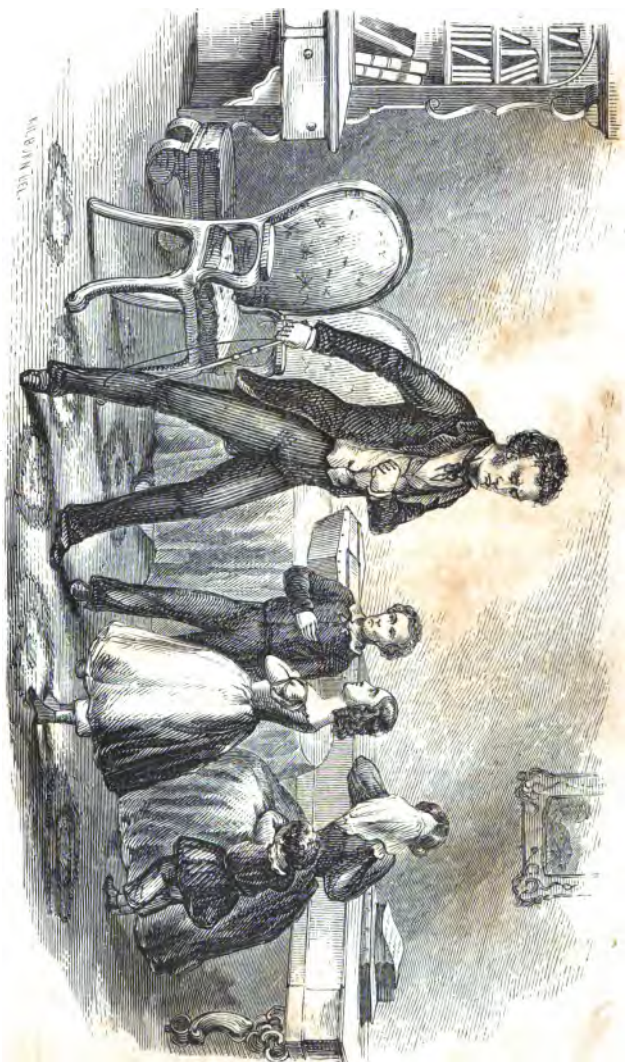
"Put up your whip, my father," she said, in tones so sweet that it sounded like a voice from the spirit world.

He looked on her a moment: to his disordered imagination she appeared to him as the spirit of his sainted mother. Awed into submission, he obeyed her request and left the room, half sobered.

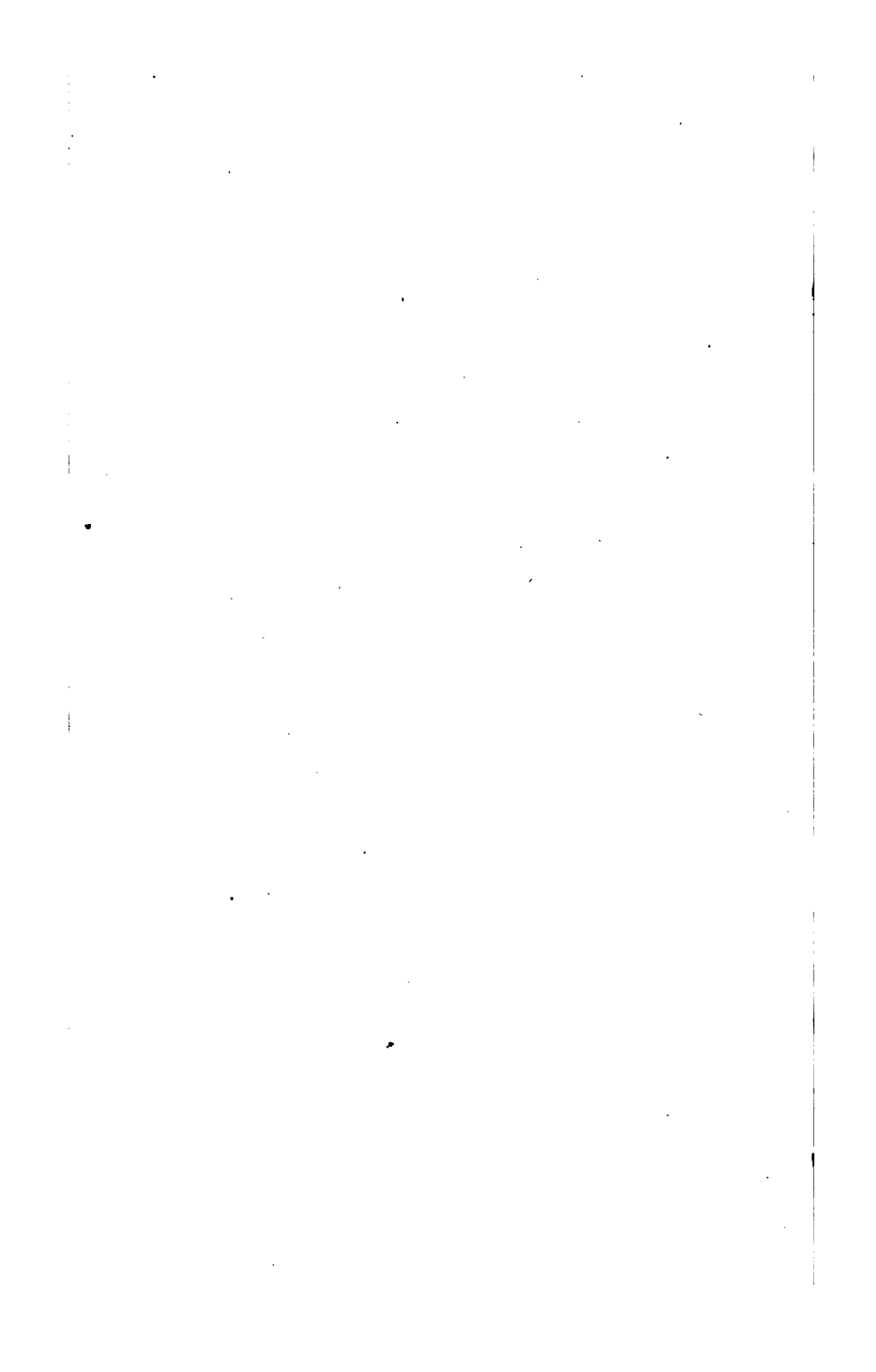
Now the strong, energetic woman has melted back to a child again, and Nellie falls exhausted and weeping into her mother's lap.

"Bless you, my child! God bless you!" And their tears were mingled together.

Poor Jamie! The excitement has been too much for his waning strength. He has fainted and fallen to the floor. They raised his frail form in their arms and tenderly laid him on the bed. They chafed his cold, white hands, and bathed his marble brow, kissed his pale, thin lips, and called him by the most endearing names. He heard them



"Strike me! I can bear it. But touch him not. Beware!" p. 72.



not. Their hot tears fell upon his face : they were not heeded. There he lay, like a beautiful lily half severed by some ruthless hand from its parent stem.

The physician is now with them : he tells them he is not dead ; and now they redouble their exertions. His measures are prompt and judicious ; and soon the wheels of life move feebly on again.

"Mother !" faintly whispered the child, "don't cry ! He will not hurt me much. Don't cry !"

"No one shall hurt you, my boy," said the kind doctor, half comprehending the case before him.

The eyes of the child wandered anxiously round the room ; but his father was not there. The careful physician had led him from the room.

"Be quiet," he said to the mother and sister, "for his life hangs upon a slender thread." It was all in vain : the hand of Death was even now upon him : no earthly power can save. Now his tender frame is convulsed with a terrible struggle ; like an aspen leaf, he trembles in its iron grasp. Ere long a beautiful quiet steals over him, as if, like a weary infant, he would go to sleep. Now his eyes are open, and a smile, all radiant with the light of heaven, spread over his face. Claspings his hands as if in ecstasy, he murmured, "Don't you see them, mother ? How beautiful they look ! They are coming nearer, mother ! O, how bright they shine ! They are smiling and calling me ! Mother, can I go to them now ? But hush ! they are sweetly singing. Come, sister, and learn their song ; it is beautiful, beautiful, mother."

And now the struggle between life and death commenced. It was long and hard, but is over now, and another soul is freed ; another voice has joined in the anthem of the pure.

"This is your work!" said the doctor to the wretched man. "God grant it may rouse you from your terrible infatuation and save you from a drunkard's grave!"

Poor Mrs. Lee! Can she now bless the hand which has so deeply afflicted her? Can she kiss the rod? It is harder now than when her feeble infant went to rest; and, as she bowed her head upon the pillow where the clay of her eldest boy still reposed, such a weight of sorrow was resting upon her that she could neither look to Heaven for strength nor calm the mighty billows of distress which came surging over her soul.

"Let me die!" she thought; "for I can never, never be reconciled to this. My child! O my child! thou wast not taken from us, but we have sent thee hence. Canst thou not return, my beautiful, my cherished one? I did not bid thee go."

Her brain grew wild with the terrible struggle. Clasp- ing her hands tightly across her forehead, and forgetting that she was not alone with the dead, she exclaimed, "Come back to me, my darling! O God! I did not bid him go. Wilt thou not send him back?"

"You shall go to him," said a Christian friend; "but he cannot come to you. Dear Mrs. Lee! look up, look up. Let your faith penetrate beyond the veil that hides him from you. Think of him as a spirit pure and bright, as

forever free from the curse of sin. Think of him as being forever near that Savior whom his childish heart so loved on earth. O, think of him as yours still, and as one of the brightest links that shall bind your soul to heaven. Remember that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the permission of our heavenly Father ; and, while I mingle my tears with yours, I must still whisper, Look up, dear friend, look up ; there is light for thee above."

How soothing and precious to that mother's heart was that voice of Christian sympathy ! She allowed herself to be led — or almost carried — from the room ; for the heavy sorrow in her bosom, together with long, weary nights of watching with her infant, had almost deprived her of strength. She was prevailed upon to retire ; and exhausted nature sought repose in sleep.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MOTHER'S LAMENT.—NELLIE'S FIRST GREAT SORROW.—THE AGONY OF THE WRETCHED FATHER.—HE SEEKS RELIEF IN THE DRUNKARD'S BOWL.—HIS DESCENT IS RAPID.

THE light is quenched ; the starry light
Of my little circle has fled ;
For the beauteous form of my eldest boy
Lies cold, and still, and dead.

Hushed is the voice, the silvery voice,
That fell so sweetly on my ear ;
And the pale, cold brow that is sleeping now
Heeds not the bitter tear.

And thou, my little infant bud,
Whose petals were unfolding to the sun,
Didst from the gathering tempest flee away
Back to thine own bright home of endless day.

O, can I give thee up, my cherished one,
Sweet child of many hopes, my darling son ?
O Death, how couldst thou thus have plucked my flower,
And placed another thorn in this my bower !

The hand of Death has fallen like midnight shadows
On my crushed and panting soul :

O God! my heart is breaking!
Look down, in pity save, and make it whole.

O pale and weeping mother,
Look to a God of love;
Look up, poor, mourning mother;
There is light for thee above.

O, that was a bitter night to poor, lonely Nellie Lee on which her brother died. She had gone away and wrestled alone with the first great sorrow of her heart. She wept until her temples throbbed and her head felt light and dizzy; still she could not stop, until from mere exhaustion she sank into a troubled sleep.

Can you say that Edward Lee had none of a father's feelings left? O, no; but they were mistaken feelings. When a kind friend led him to the bed, and, folding back the snowy sheet, bade him look upon the dead, the strong frame of the deluded father shook with suppressed emotion.

There they lay, the fairhaired, beautiful boy of twelve, and the tiny infant but a few months old, sweetly sleeping in the embrace of death. For a few moments their father gazed upon them; then, snatching his hand almost rudely from his friend, he exclaimed, "Let me go! O, let me go! Ask me not to look upon them, wretch that I am. Already the fires of hell are burning at my vitals; then let me go and quench this raging thirst. I did it!" he cried in tones of agony. "I killed that boy! The doctor said so. You may scorn me if you will; but if you knew the living fire that is burning at my brain and hurrying me along to the drunkard's grave, then you would pity me."

Louder and fiercer grew the voice of the frenzied man, wilder grew his bloodshot eyes. In vain they tried to soothe him and call him back to reason. Their words of kindness fell like scorching coals upon his maddened brain. He fled from the house. They knew he had gone to still the upbraidings of his soul with the drunkard's drink. He drank that he might forget himself, his grief and degradation.

The mother, pale and weeping, stands beside her dead once more : no murmuring thoughts are in her bosom now. "Sleep on !" she sadly said, as she gazed upon their little forms, "sleep on ! I would not wake you for a thousand worlds ; but in a few short years I will come to you. You have been taken from a world of sorrow, and I would not call you back. Farewell, dear, precious flowers ! You are cold and lifeless now ; to-day the damp, dark earth will hide you from my view ; but in your spirits' home there are lights and joys untold. There, loved ones, wait for me. I'll come ! I'll come !"

O, how cold and gloomy looks the lonely house now that those little forms are laid in the silent tomb !

The home of Edward Lee became more and more distasteful to him. He missed his eldest boy ; for, before he became intemperate, he had been the pride of his heart and the light of his eyes. Now that he was gone forever remorse was busy at his heart ; yet it only hurried him onward more rapidly in his downward course.

CHAPTER XIII.

MRS. LEE LEARNS THE EXTENT OF HER DESTITUTION AND DEGRADATION.—FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HER LIFE SHE FAINTS.—COLD INDIFFERENCE OF SQUIRE HAYNES.

THREE sad, silent, lonely weeks had passed ; and Alice Lee was striving hard to conquer the grief which was wasting her little remaining strength. She was aware that her husband had become involved in debt, but to what extent she could not learn. She felt that there were sorrow and tribulation in store for her ; and, for the sake of her children, she resolved to meet it with Christian fortitude. Many times during the day she had inquired of her own heart, "Is there no way to reclaim the wanderer?" Many times had she called upon her heavenly Father to show her the way, and make her the humble instrument of his redemption. She resolved to try once more : and now a new hope has been kindled in her bosom.

"He loved me once," she thought ; "perhaps he loves me still. I will tell him how my heart has bled, of my deep, undying love. With tears I will plead with him to leave this place, to sell this sweet home, and go with me

to some quiet cottage in some far-distant town. I fear not poverty, — O, no, — nor work ; it is not that ; but I cannot see the noble being I have loved so well degraded, ruined, lost, the glorious image of truth and virtue effaced from his manly brow, and his soul, his immortal soul, tainted by the withering, blighting curse of sin. It is this that bows my spirit down to earth. It must not be ; he must be saved."

She rose, prepared their evening meal with unusual care, bathed her tear-stained eyes, and endeavored to remove all traces of sadness. But alas ! she cannot recall the roses which have faded from her cheeks : the light of happiness no longer kindles in her eye as the echo of that well-known footstep falls upon her ear. Her heart beats rapidly and almost painfully as she hears some one approach and rap. A shade of disappointment passed over the agitated features of Mrs. Lee as she arose and opened the door.

"Good evening, ma'am," said Squire Haynes, bowing very low. "I have a little business with you" said he, walking in uninvited ; for Mrs. Lee stood for a moment unable to speak.

With the keen perception of her sex, she felt that some new and unexpected trial had come upon her. "Business with me !" she exclaimed, with a look of bewildered amazement. "What business can you have with me ?"

The squire had very deliberately seated himself, and invited her to do the same. "Your look of amazement rather surprises me. You know my errand, of course. Mr. Lee told me this morning you would be ready to move to-morrow."

"Move to-morrow!" murmured the fainting woman, as she sank into her chair, pale as death and almost insensible.

"I hope you will not resort to the fashionable folly of fainting, Mrs. Lee. It will not frighten me, however; I am used to that sort of thing. My wife, for instance, can faint at a minute's warning: ladies like to look interesting, you know," said he with a sneer.

These cruel words had the desired effect on the truthful, noble-hearted woman. Her faintness passed in a moment; and she arose, strong in her own integrity, and stood before him, the image of offended dignity. "Sir," said she, — and her eyes flashed as they had not done for a long time, — "sir, your language is as mysterious as it is insulting: explain yourself. Knowing with whom I have to deal, I am now prepared for almost any thing: proceed." The squire hesitated. "Your business, sir, if you have any; if not, please leave me — O, leave me to myself!"

There was a depth of anguish in the voice of Mrs. Lee which startled even the heart of the squire, and his guilty soul felt one little twinge of pity; but it lasted only for a moment.

"Be seated; you are excited now," he said; "and I will show you something which will explain all." And he handed her the ill-gotten document which conveyed her home and all it contained into the hands of the unfeeling man. She read on for a few moments. The squire watched her eagerly; he expected a general outburst of feeling; but, although her face and hands were white as purest marble,

no word or sigh escaped her parted lips. Her eyes were fixed on the hateful paper.

"I perceive this is rather new to you," said the squire, whose blunted sympathies had tried to flutter once again. Still she did not stir; her features grew more and more rigid every moment. He became alarmed. Was she dead, and he there alone with her? He took the paper from her unresisting hand and hastily left the house just as a kind neighbor, who knew the exact state of affairs, but from motives of mistaken kindness had forborne to mention to Mrs. Lee, was passing by. She saw Squire Haynes, and, noticing that he looked unusually excited for him, could not refrain from stepping in to ascertain the cause.

She found Mrs. Lee as he had left her—cold and motionless, and apparently dead. She called the children, who were playing up stairs, sent for her husband, and in a few moments they had laid her upon a bed.

O, that was a scene which the rumseller and the advocate of rumselling should have witnessed. They should have heard the frantic cries of those affrighted children, Nellie especially, who was convulsed with grief that could not be controlled.

"Mamma! mamma!" shrieked little Johnny. "Why don't you speak to me?"

"Mamma don't hear you, poor little fellow!" said Mr. Gage. Tears sprang into his own eyes as he strove to comfort and quiet the afflicted children; while his kind-hearted wife endeavored to restore life to their stricken

mother. For half an hour she bathed and rubbed her, and applied all the usual remedies, without success. She was almost despairing, when she discovered a feeble pulse. With renewed energy she continued her efforts, wiping away at intervals her own blinding tears.

"It is almost cruel," she whispered to her husband, "to call her back. Were it not for them," she said, pointing to the children, "I should have no heart to try."

- Mr. Lee returned before his wife was restored to consciousness; but he was too much intoxicated to fully realize the sad, sad spectacle before him. Nellie, on being assured that her mother was not dead, had stationed herself by her side, smoothed back her disordered hair, and bathed her pale face with her falling tears.

Mrs. Lee aroused and raised herself up as if just awakened from a quiet sleep. Looking at Nellie, she said, "Why do you weep? I have had a delightful dream; and I feel assured that this new and unexpected affliction will be overruled for our good. It is hard, my child, to go forth from this pleasant home, where you first breathed the breath of life, where we have spent so many happy days. As yet you have not felt the blighting curse of grinding poverty: now that it has come, meet it with fortitude, my daughter."

Nellie's tears flowed forth afresh, for she thought her mother wild and wandering. Mrs. Gage now stepped to the bedside and quietly remarked, "Your daughter does not seem to understand you. Shall I explain?" Mrs.

Lee nodded her assent. She then led the weeping girl from the room and told her all, begging her at the same time to bear up under this heavy trial for her mother's sake. But that was needless, for Nellie's eyes were already dry : her mother's reason was spared, and she hoped soon to see her well again.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DREAM, OR VISION, OF MRS. LEE.—SQUIRE HAYNES ATTEMPTS TO GET THE SIGNATURE OF MRS. LEE.—IS HIGHLY INCENSED AT HER REFUSAL.

NEXT day Mrs. Lee wrote to her parents, informing them of all that had transpired. She kept nothing back; and in conclusion she said, "Dear, kind, and truly beloved parents, urge me not to come unto you. Blame me not if I refuse to leave my infatuated husband. Should I do so, with no one to care for him, in a few short months he would sleep in a drunkard's grave. Then make not the self-imposed duty of watching over my fallen husband more bitter by your disapproval of my cause. Now that I know my duty, O, cheer my desponding heart with words of encouragement and affection! To prove to you that I am right, let me tell you of a beautiful dream, or vision, which I have had: you may call it which you please.

"When that cruel, artful man, who had so deeply wronged both me and mine, placed in my hand the document which conveyed away all our earthly goods, my heart rebelled. I knew they were not his by right. I could

have torn the hateful deed to atoms. My brain seemed all on fire ; my hands were clinched upon the paper. In a moment more I should have torn it into fragments, had not an unseen Power restrained me.

“Two shining ones, more beautiful than tongue can tell, seemed hovering over me. ‘Submit, dear mother!’ said a well-remembered voice, in tones so sweet and soothing that the angry billows which were sweeping over my soul were hushed, subdued. ‘Fear not,’ whispered the voice again, ‘fear not, but follow us.’ And then they seemed to raise me on their shining wings and bear me silently and swiftly far away. They placed me on a grassy plot, beneath the spreading boughs of a tree more luxuriant and beautiful than any I had seen before.

“I now perceived that I was far above the earth. ‘Look,’ said the glorious beings by my side, ‘and learn to submit to Him who doeth all things well.’

“What was my surprise on beholding my own beloved home directly below me!—and then a little band, myself among the rest, came forth with tears and bitter sobs. They seemed to take nothing with them save a few almost worthless things which the oppressor did not want. I followed them with a saddened eye until they entered a miserable hut. Then it seemed as if months had passed away: they were dark, dreary months to the inhabitants of the hut.

“Precisely what transpired there I could not see; but the same bright, glorious ones who were ministering unto me seemed constantly watching over them. For a little

time a cloud seemed resting on the hut : it was hidden from my view. I raised my supplicating eyes to my beauteous guides : they seemed to read my thoughts. They bade me wait : 'It is the end we wish to show you, not the way.'

"Then the cloud passed, and I saw my husband writhing in agony such as I had never witnessed before. I noticed with surprise that I, myself, at first shrank back dismayed ; but, when my head grew weary and my heart faint, then my guardian spirits hovered near me, whispering words of encouragement, holding out inducements, sustaining and cheering me, and urging me on to duty.

"Then the sick man raved so wildly that I shut my eyes and groaned aloud. 'Look not too much upon the way,' said my companions ; 'but wait and behold the end.' Again I raised my eyes : a change great and marvellous had passed over the suffering man.

"He lay sleeping sweetly as an infant in its mother's arms ; and, by some mysterious power, I seemed to be drawing nearer and nearer to his bedside. Then I was bending over him : his face wore the pure and peaceful look of other days. I gently kissed his cheek : he awoke and smiled upon me ; he called me by my name. O, what a flood of life and joy then rushed into my soul !

"His words and tones were full of love and gratitude ; and I, — O, I cannot express the joy which filled my heart.

"The happy spirits which were watching over us then spread their golden wings, which were now so dazzling that I could not look upon them, and soared away, with songs and shouts of joy, to bear the glorious news that the

wanderer had returned, that a soul that was lost had been found.

"They told me I had lain in a fainting fit. Perhaps I had. You may think this the workings of a disordered imagination ; it may be so ; but to me it is the voice of the eternal God. The path of duty lies plain and full before me. God grant that I may be faithful to my trust !

"Yours with patience and submission,

"ALICE."

Squire Haynes returned home rather dejected, for he had not obtained the signature of Mrs. Lee. Her husband had frequently assured him there would be no trouble on that score ; but it was now evident she was entirely unacquainted with the whole transaction. He felt alarmed, and was provoked with himself. He saw he had made a great mistake in not approaching her in a more cautious and conciliatory manner. He resolved to see her early in the morning before she would have time to consult her friends. He would make some sacrifice, if necessary. If concessions and sacrifices failed, he would take the next best course, and resort to threats, &c.

Accordingly next day he made his appearance when the family were at breakfast, with his face all clothed in hypocritical smiles. He apologized for his early visit, and said "he was sorry to trouble them so soon again ; but important business would claim his attention elsewhere at a later hour ; besides," he added, looking at Mr. Lee, "I thought this would be a good opportunity to sign this conveyance."

Mr. Lee looked embarrassed. In spite of his degradation, he could not help feeling ashamed of his conduct — ashamed to ask his devoted wife to close her own doors against herself and family. He remained silent. The squire turned towards Mrs. Lee, as if he expected to see her ready to comply with his wishes, remarking at the same time, "This is a great reverse of fortune, such as we are all liable to encounter ; it may be my turn next. Hope I shall be prepared to meet it with fortitude."

But he encountered a look of resolute determination in the countenance of Mrs. Lee, which satisfied him that all his skill and adroitness would be called into action in order to accomplish his purpose. He continued by saying, "though he was a hardhearted man, he meant to be liberal with *them*, at any rate. This furniture is all included in the writings ; but if Mrs. Lee will give me her signature I will present it to her. As I am in something of a hurry, I should like to have you sign it immediately," he said, rising and walking towards her.

"Squire Haynes, your errand and your offer are alike fruitless ; for I cannot so far forget myself and children as to become a party to that nefarious transaction, as dishonourable as it is cruel. I shall never sign that document, sir : it is in vain for you to ask it."

"I think you must have forgotten your duty to your husband, madam, to refuse to comply with so reasonable a request. You are aware, I suppose, that he has promised me your name ; you touch his honor when you refuse your signature."

"Pray, sir, don't talk of honor at such a time. I think I have my husband's interest *almost* as much at heart as yourself," was the cutting reply; "but I cannot think it my duty to help rivet the chains which you have been binding around him." Thus saying, she arose and left the room.

"Mr. Lee!" shouted the enraged squire, "what's this? What does all this mean? Haven't you passed your word, as a man of honor, that I should have no trouble? And now you sit there and hear your wife refuse to sign her name, besides insulting me, and have not a word to say! How is that? Come," said the wily squire, in a low tone, "get your old lady to sign this, and you shall have a treat at my expense. Come, perhaps you can coax her; if not, why, d—n it! drive her. I'd like to see a wife of mine cutting up in that way; I would bring her up with the horsewhip, quick time."

"Well, I rather think I can use that kind of an argument as well as you can." The degraded and now excited husband arose as if going in pursuit of one.

"No you don't!" said Mr. Gage, as he laid his sinewy hand on his shoulder; "no you don't! I'm here myself now," he said, casting a look of contempt and scorn on the squire. "My name is John Gage; I guess you have seen me before to-day; and if you don't take yourself off, why then you will have me and a half dozen others on your track. The law don't allow forcing in such cases. I happen to know that there is a little villany in this

whole transaction ; and I, for one, stand ready to ferret it out ; at any rate, I intend to see fair play."

The squire, after a moment's reflection, rose to depart, giving them legal notice to move, and forbidding them to take any furniture excepting a few worthless articles such as he mentioned.

CHAPTER XV.

SCENE IN THE HUT.—THE MOTHER'S PRAYER.—THE FATHER RETURNS INTOXICATED.

COME with me to yon lonely hut. The broken panes of glass, the desolate look about the premises, speak in gloomy language to the experienced heart. "This is not the home of industry, economy, and virtue," you mentally exclaim. But judge not too hastily from appearances. You are partly right, but still are wrong. For Vice is resident here; her footprints are easily traced: you see them in the doorless barn, the cheerless house, in the absence of a woodpile, and in the lonely axe, silently waiting in its accustomed place at the door.

But, if you look attentively to the right, you will see a young girl, some fifteen years of age, with a few dry sticks of wood to scatter light and warmth on the shivering little ones inside, who are watching at the window to see if sister is coming.

Notice the pale, thoughtful features of the child, her scanty and well-mended dress. Her countenance, though

pale, beams with a look of sweetness and patience seldom seen in one so young.

This is Nellie Lee ; this hut her wretched home and that of her heartbroken, virtuous mother. Come with me, gentle reader, beneath this humble roof ; for there is much that is noble, good, and pure. It is true, the walls are dark and dreary ; for there is no paint or whitewash here. The furniture is coarse and scanty ; but all is neat and clean.

The patient, careworn mother plies her needle, that her little ones may be kept from the stinging frosts of winter. Her head is weary with planning to make the most of her limited means, in order to supply the urgent wants of her family. Nellie has now come in with her arms full of wood. Quietly and quickly she lights the fire, and speaks cheerful words to the cold and hungry little ones, now huddling round the hearth.

"Sissy Nellie," said the darkeyed pet, "sissy Nellie, sha'n't we have some supper now ?"

"Yes, little Johnny," she said, and, snatching up the boy, covered his round, fat face with loving kisses.

"Father hain't come yet," whispered the little boy. "Don't you hope he won't, till we have some nice, warm bread? Roast some 'taters, too, sissy ; they are so good." Then, jumping down, he ran and threw himself into his mother's lap. "Kiss Johnny, too, mamma!"

The mother's face is pale and wan, for her heart has been pierced with many sorrows ; yet she smiled on her boy, and kissed the proffered lips with a heart full of

gratitude to her heavenly Father for giving her those cherished ones to light her pathway here, and offered up a silent prayer for grace and strength to train them up for usefulness and heaven.

The fire burns brightly ; and the merry eyes of Freddie, Sue, and Johnny dance with pleasure as they watch the preparations going on for the evening meal.

"If father only wouldn't never come home again," said Fred, "I should soon be large enough to get wood and cut it. Nell and I would keep things nice and straight — wouldn't we, sister ? See !" said he, stretching up to show his wonderful dimensions, "I am ever so much taller than Johnny now. Mother, don't you wish father would go away ?"

"Hush ! hush !" said his mother, mildly. "You must not speak of your poor father so. Don't you remember how kind he used to be before he went astray and drank that poisonous, hateful drink, that takes away his reason and makes him what you see him now ? O my son, beware ! Never taste of ardent spirits ; and pity your poor, fallen father, for he knows not how cruelly he treats us. Now, my children, when you say your prayers, ask God to bring your erring father back to duty, happiness, and us."

"Is that the way, mother ?" said little Susie. "I heard you read in the Bible that God would give us any thing we asked in faith ; and I have been asking God every night since to take away my naughty father, and give me a better father, that we could all love."

"That was very, very wrong, my dear. You must ask God to forgive your father and make him good."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Nellie, who said the potatoes were almost done. The mother laid aside her work; and soon the nicely-browned johnny cake and mealy potatoes were smoking on the board, and the now happy family were seated around the table. The clattering knives and forks and merry voices plainly told how much the evening meal was relished and enjoyed. The absent father is not forgotten by the ever-thoughtful wife. A large plateful — the best the table affords — is placed in the chimney corner to await his arrival.

Eat quickly and laugh merrily, little ones; let your hearts expand in this atmosphere of love; for a cloud is hovering over you, and a storm will soon burst upon you, which shall send the lifeblood curdling back to your saddened hearts.

The meal is almost finished: yet let us take another look at the table. "O, what a merry group!" you say. Three faces there are beaming with smiles. Their merry eyes are swimming over with fun and frolic. Even Nellie has almost forgotten herself. There is but one aching heart in this merry group.

O happy childhood's day and sweet simplicity of childhood's heart, drinking in with joy and gladness the sweets of to-day, nor looking with straining eyes for the ills of the coming morrow!

Whence comes the shadow on that mother's brow, which

cannot be chased away by smiles that the heart feeleth not? She is thinking of the past, of her childhood's home, of her own first home, and the happy days she spent with those loved ones there; and a pang of regret shoots through her heart, and a sigh—the echo of a broken spirit—grates harshly on the ear of Nellie. She raises her eyes to her mother's; and in a moment the truth flashes on her mind that their joy will soon be turned to sorrow.

As the mother bows her head upon her hand, the language of her soul is this: "My children! O my children! dearer to me than life, would that I could save you from a destiny like this! Willingly—nay, gladly—would I lay down my life for you; but it would avail you nothing. But life,—O Heaven! in mercy spare me this, that I may save their lives from utter desolation and their souls from the snares of sin!"

Could we see with our spirit eyes, even here we should behold God's angels watching over this household. The angels of love and mercy are hovering over the table, while those of darkness and despair are waiting in the distance. How terrible the latter! how beautiful the former! How happy they look, the angels of Love and Mercy! for the scene before them is pleasing to their spirits. The angel of love now whispers to her sister angel, and with upraised hand she says, "Hush! for lo, she prayeth!" Behold them listening attentively to the silent prayer of that mother's heart.

"Heavenly Father, thou knowest all my sorrows; thou

knowest all my sins ; thou seest that my soul is crushed and bowed with heavy anguish. Draw nigh unto me, I beseech thee, and open wide the arms of love and mercy, that I may find a refuge in thy bosom. Strengthen me, that I may bear these heavy burdens with meekness ; and save me from despair. Now, O blessed Jesus, I would take my children in the arms of faith and lay them at the foot of the cross. O Savior of a sinful world, wilt thou accept and save them for thine own glorious sake ? Once more, O heavenly Parent, I would call upon thee in behalf of the erring one. Hear me, I beseech thee, and remember the wanderer in his wanderings. Save, O, save him from the power of sin and death ! I would ask it in the name of Jesus."

The ministering spirits who hovered over them spread their golden wings and soared away with the prayer of faith, all fragrant with the tears of sorrow, and have borne it to the throne of God. How beautiful their mission !

Turn now to the spirits of darkness and despair. How much of hate, and wrath, and malice is pictured there ! How looks the mother now ? The light of resignation is beaming in her eye. Her soul is strong ; for faith is there. Her heart is lighter ; for she is resting on the arm of God.

"Hark !" says Fred. "Father is coming !"

Little Johnny rushes to his mother's arms, while Susie gets behind her chair. Pale faces are turned towards the door ; for he whose footsteps were once hailed with joyous

mirth has now become a terror to them. The kind, indulgent father of other days has now become a tyrant, regardless alike of the happiness and respectability of his once cherished family.

The door is now thrown rudely open, and a fiend in human form staggers into their midst. His clothes are torn and soiled. His eyes are wild and glaring; for his soul is full of hate. Susie involuntarily crept into one corner of the room.

"Come back!" shouted the father, with an angry curse. "I'll learn you to run when you see me coming!" said he, giving her a push. "And you!" shaking his fist at Nellie, "you lazy imp, — why haven't you watered the cow and fed the pig — hey?"

"We have but just had supper, father," said the wife, quietly. "She will attend to it now."

"Go to h—ll!" said the intoxicated man, hissing through his teeth. "Where did you get your supper — hey? Can you tell who maintains you and your lazy brats?"

"I've saved you some supper," replied the wife. "Aren't you hungry?"

"Go to h—ll with your supper, or I'll send you there!" again shrieked the inebriate.

"You will send yourself first," said the evil spirits, with a horrible grin. "Go ahead, old fellow! You are safe enough if we could only stop this everlasting praying here; but then, so long as Deacon Giles, Squire Haynes, and other eminent Christians are so faithful in our service, there is not much cause for alarm. So go ahead!"

Thus they would have hurried him on to deeds of desperation ; but the guardian angels have returned, and are watching over those who put their trust in Heaven, and not a hair of their heads is injured.

Terrible threats and curses are now heard where one short hour ago all was peace and love, bringing sorrow and dismay to every heart.

The Scripture saith, "The wicked shall not go unpunished ;" and think you, reader, the distiller and rumseller will not meet their just reward ? Think you that the tempter is not worse than the tempted ? that they who led on, step by step, this poor ruined man to destruction, are not worse than he ? He was thoughtless ; but they were cruel and designing. They coveted his gold to fill their purses. They have it ; but it shall burn like fire and sting like the "poison of asps ;" for there is a God in heaven who dealeth justly.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SAD REFLECTIONS OF NELLIE.—SHE FINDS COMFORT AND CONSOLATION AT THE THRONE OF GRACE.

NELLIE, on her father's return, started off to fulfil his commands ; but her heart was full to bursting with sorrow and indignation. "My father!—can I call him that?" she thought. "That name was once so dear!—that name which fell so sweetly from my darling mother's lips, long, long ago! But yet it cannot be so very long, for I am only fifteen now; yet I should think that twenty years had passed since Squire Haynes first came and sold that liquid poison that has blighted all our joys. I know it is wrong to hate him; but O, how can I help it? He used to pat me on the head and say, 'Bright girl! smart girl!' &c., when he was striving for my father's property; but now I am nothing but 'poor Nell, the drunkard's child!' Who made me so? Who but he?"

"A few short years ago I was a happy, joyous child: had never known a sorrow or a real want; but now I've nothing left, nothing but wants—no clothes, no school, no books. And, what is worse than all, I have no

father now! Nay, worse than none; for now he's nothing but a curse—a deep reproach—a scourge!

“How changed I am! how changed are all things else! I'm but a child in years; and yet I am no longer young. My heart is old—made old by care and sorrow. O, I could wish to die, this world seems all so cold and dark! They pass me by, those friends of other days, some with pity, some with scorn. Well, let them scorn me if they will; it only makes me wish to live, to show them their deep folly. Ah, now I think of my dear, patient, sorrowing mother, hope, sweet hope, comes back again. For her I fain would live, to pay her back tenfold for all her care and love. I am her eldest born; to me she looks for aid: she shall not look in vain.

“O thou departed brother of my heart! younger in years than I, but older far in wisdom and in strength, thou wouldst have been her stay; she could have leaned on thee. But thou art gone. With tears and deep regret we laid thee in the grave. And hast thou left me, brother dear, alone in this cold world? Ah, no! I feel thy presence now. My heart grows stronger as I think of thee. Like thee I will forget myself, and labor hard for those so dear to me. Be thou my guardian angel still, and help me in this work!”

Nellie has returned to the barn. Her heart is softened and subdued; and as she feeds the gentle animal she thinks of Christ, the Savior of mankind—his lowly birth, his sufferings, his poverty, and death. “Was it for such as I, dear Savior of a sinful world,” she cried, “was it for

such, you left the bright abodes of bliss — a stable for thy birthplace, a manger for thy bed? Amazing love!

With streaming eyes and upraised hands she knelt. That prayer was heard and registered in heaven. Go forth, frail mortal, in the strength of Him who is all strength, filled with the love of Him who is all love; and though your pathway here be strewed with thorns, it will lead you up to paradise above, where never-fading, fragrant flowers shall never cease to bloom. Be faithful to thy trust, and thou shalt wear a crown of everlasting life.

With a light step and a lighter heart Nellie returns to her home. All is quiet there; for the inebriate father has thrown himself upon the bed which stands in one corner of the room. Johnny has left his mother's arms, and, with a sly look at the bed, runs to meet his sister.

Little Susie is trying to light the now dying embers. Fred steps behind his mother's chair, and, shaking his fist at the bed, turns with a look of sympathy from his mother to his sister, as much as to say, "What a brute to treat you so! I wish I were a man!"

The mother's thoughts were sadly and deeply occupied. She was thinking of her children, Nellie especially, who had been a frail, delicate child, precocious from her birth. "Yes," she exclaimed, "I have not thought of this enough. I have leaned too much on that frail, tender plant. This must not be. Nellie, my daughter, I have been thinking it is hard for you to do the out-door work; and, now that the cold weather has come, I miss our beloved Jamie more and more."

"But brother is so happy up there!" said Susie, as she raised her hand towards heaven.

"It is true, my child. Our loss is his eternal gain. Let us try to imitate his example, so that, when our heavenly Father calls us hence, we may all meet him in heaven."

"All, mother? Will father go to heaven too?" asked Susie.

Her mother rose abruptly, saying, "It is getting dark, and I shall milk to night."

Nellie expostulated; but, finding her mother firm, she submitted. "Let Fred take my shoes and slide a while, then," said she.

Permission being granted, the happy boy rushes forth to enjoy for a few moments that freedom and exercise in the open air which are the birthright of every child, and one of the greatest luxuries that boyhood can enjoy.

Look at this, ye makers and venders of liquid fire! look at this sad picture, ye who are engaged in demons' work!—yes, demons of the very lowest grade. Beelzebub himself would blush to wring the lifeblood from that loving mother's heart. Would he, all God-defiant and fallen as he is, blot out from childhood's soul the joys of childhood's hour, and hurry them along, all weak and helpless, and plunge them unprepared into the dark and stern realities of life, life as you see it in yon inebriate's hut? No; he would scorn the deed. He leaves such low, degrading work for men.

Think of this, ye who claim this land as Freedom's home!

think of this young child, confined in one small room! And why is this? Surely he is guilty of no crime, unless that be one—the being born in this enlightened land, where the rights of all are guarantied by law. “That is no crime,” you say. Why, then, is he shut up from morn till night without any of the amusements belonging to childhood? It is because he is too thinly clad to meet the searching winds of winter. “’Tis hard,” you think; and so it is. But then ’tis just. This is a land of liberty. His father has the right to spend his hard-earned dollar at the bar, to satisfy his craving, morbid appetite, instead of buying food or clothes for wife and children. And Squire Haynes, if he sees fit to want the bread from out their mouths or clothes from off their backs, he has a right to them. Of course he has. The law upholds him in it. Shame on such a law! and shame on such a man who can uphold in any way, at any time, so base a theft! Theft is too good a name for such a deed. How cautiously he steals away—little by little—the senses of the man, then watches with a vulture’s eye for every cent that falls into his purse! And they who were once clothed, fed, and cared for, go often—far too often—hungry to their cheerless beds.

CHAPTER XVII.

FREDDIE'S SUCCESS AND JOY. — LITTLE JOHNNY'S WISH. — THE MOTHER'S PRESENTIMENT.

TWILIGHT has deepened, and the family, with the exception of Fred, have gathered around the dying embers. The last candle has been lighted ; and, now that all things have been put to rights, it must be extinguished ; “for what — if there should be sickness in the night — should we do for a candle or fuel ?” thought Mrs. Lee.

“Freddie has been gone a long time. I hope he will get back before father wakes,” said Nellie, as she looked anxiously forth from the window. “There he is now,” she exclaimed, “with his arms full of wood !”

In he comes whistling, boy fashion, brushing down every thing before him, and almost running over the younger children in his eagerness to show his pile of wood. “See that ! see that !” said he. “I got all that between here and the meadow. If I had shoes, I tell you what, I wouldn’t sit here shivering half the time. Haven’t I had a nice time sliding ! I tell you what, it was prime, and no

mistake. Your shoes pinched my toes a little, sis ; but I didn't care for that."

"Be quiet, my son," said Mrs. Lee. "I am glad you have made out so well ; you will have to borrow sister's shoes again, won't you ? It is strange we have never thought of that before."

"Why, mamma, can't I have a pair of my own ?" said he, speaking low. "Father drinks enough every day to buy me a pair."

"Hush ! hush !" answered his mother. "I am going to speak to him this very night about it ; you must be patient."

"Mamma, take Johnny ; Johnny feels bad," said the little fellow.

"What is the matter with Johnny ?" said Mrs. Lee, seating him on her lap.

"Johnny don't like to stay here," the child said, with a quivering lip ; "it is cold here."

"Where do you want to go, bub ?" said Freddie.

"To heaven," said the little one, choking down his emotion, — "to heaven ; it is warm there, and all the children play together out doors ; every body is good there." Slowly those lids are closed over the liquid eyes, slowly the little head falls back upon his mother's bosom, as if tired of life ere the cup had been scarcely tasted.

Young as he is, his brother's words have thrown light into his mind. His little bare feet have been patting, patting about on the cold floor from morn to night. Some-

times they have been very cold, but he did not mind much about it ; but now he thinks of the pleasant times he used to have last summer, playing on the grass, chasing the butterflies, and picking flowers. It seems like a happy dream. He feels that he is wronged ; he cannot tell you why. And now his thoughts have soared away to heaven ; his soul is longing to expand itself in a holier, higher, happier state of existence.

His mother leaned her head over the child, kissed his dimpled cheek, but did not speak : hot tears were falling fast. To her his words were prophecy ; already in her mind she saw the coffin and the shroud. She folded the child closer to her heart, and looked to heaven for strength ; but for those sad and silent ones around her she must arouse herself and drive back the phantom which has taken such sudden possession of her heart.

How nobly she succeeded ! Memories of the past, long buried in the tomb of Time, are now brought forth ; bright incidents of her own childish days are listened to with eager zeal ; and all their sorrows for the moment are forgotten.

All but the weary mother have now retired to rest, and nought disturbs the stillness of the night but the deep breathing of the drunken man. O, how wearily and heavily passed the next half hour to Alice Lee ! Bright hopes of future happiness no longer cheered her heart ; the dreams of youth and wedded love had all been blighted, crushed, and dashed to earth ; and all this by

the hand of him who promised at the sacred altar to love, cherish, and protect.

Slowly and with muttered curses he that was once a man now wakes to consciousness, and, rising, staggers to a seat before the fire : then, turning with a look of hate and scorn such as a fiend might wear, he thundered, "Where's the young 'uns gadding off too?"

"They have gone to bed," said Mrs. Lee.

"That's a d——d lie! A likely story this time o' day."

"Why, Edward, it is night. See how dark it is! You have been asleep a long time, and I have been waiting to speak with you."

"Speak away, then, damn you!"

"I have been wishing to get some shoes for Freddie; he will be spoiled, shut up in the house, I fear, with nothing to do."

"Get 'em, then; I've nothing for you or him either; so hold your eternal tongue! That's the way. I never come into the house a minute but you commence your thundering gab. Go to bed and mind your own business! If you want any thing, work as I do and get it: d'ye hear? I am not going to maintain you or your brats any longer."

Mrs. Lee saw that it would be in vain to urge the matter; and she retired to rest, while he sat dozing by the hearth.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SEVERE AND SUDDEN ILLNESS OF JOHNNY, FROM WHICH HE NEVER
FULLY RECOVERS.

ERE two hours had passed she was aroused from her broken slumbers by a cough so piercing that it fell like a knell of death upon her anxious heart.

In a moment the few remaining sticks are piled upon the fire; the last candle is lighted. Johnny is in her arms, and Nellie at her side. He had been suffering from a severe cold, and now had a violent attack of the croup. It was five miles to the doctor's; and there was nothing to do with. How her heart sunk within her! The lethargy of despair was creeping over her. Turning to Nellie, she said, "I felt last evening that he must go; but I did not think it would be so soon. Dear little sufferer! you will soon be at rest; I feel that it must be so; your sufferings will be short. You will be warm there, precious one! and, although my heart will bleed afresh at this bereavement, I will not hold you back — O, no! But for those who will be left behind, I should long to follow you and be at rest."

- Nellie has been trying to speak; but a great sorrow is

at her heart : she cannot still its throbbings ; but now, with a great effort, she says, " I have heard you say, mother, where there is life, there is a little hope. O, do not give him up so soon ! Let us do something for him ! " Then, turning to her father with the energy of despair, she shook him by the shoulders, saying, " Father ! father ! Johnny is dying ! "

" Dying ! " The half-sobered man rose quickly to his feet and looked around with a bewildered stare. Nellie pointed to her brother, who was struggling for breath. In a moment he comprehended his danger. Catching his hat, he cried, " Shall I go for the doctor ? "

" No, no ; it is too late for that ; but get us some wood ; quick ! quick ! " And Edward Lee walked forth with more of manhood in his soul than he had felt for many months. Taking a rail from the fence and splitting it, he returned quickly to the house ; and soon a bright, genial fire threw its influence on all around.

Nellie quickly prepared a bag of smoking onions and applied them to the little sufferer's chest. His feet are soon immersed in soft, warm water ; a cup of cold water is quickly swallowed ; and soon the anxious watchers have the happiness to see the child revive a little. Towards morning he breathed more calmly ; and now he sleeps ; and hope, like a white-winged dove, returns once more to the inebriate's hut.

Mrs. Lee, as she looked upon her husband in his right mind, could not help feeling that far down in the darkest corner of her heart there was a little hope just springing

into existence ; again she was beginning to hope her husband would reform. Many times before she had hoped even against hope ; again and again had they been crushed ; and in bitterness of spirit she had seen them blotted out.

Had Death, in that dark, silent hour, when the light of reason was shining in upon that father's heart, — had Death then finished his mysterious work, and laid that little form, all cold and pale, silent and uncomplaining, at his father's feet, the galling chains of alcohol might then have been snapped asunder.

The monarch of the tomb for a little season has been subdued ; Death has turned away with a saddened brow. "Shall I have nought that is fair?" said he ; "nought but the bearded grain?"

"And he turned again with a confident look ;
His bony hand o'er the infant he shook ;
He scattered the seeds of death and pain,
And knew, ere long, he should come again."

Yes, the germ of Death has been planted in that infant form ; and, although the hand of affection has stayed his progress for a time, his work will still go on, and Death will again return to claim his victim.

"O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The reaper came that way."

For the sufferings of little Johnny had been so great during the winter, that, when the spring came and the flowers were beginning to unfold their leaves, Death was hailed

by the sorrowing mother as an angel of mercy, who had come to transplant her beautiful bud to the garden of paradise. But, ere this, long weary months must pass away. In a few days Johnny was running about again; but the cough remained, and the ever-watchful mother was not deceived.

Edward Lee resolved, on that trying night, that he would do more for the comfort of his family. For a few days he kept his promise. Freddie had some shoes, and many comforts were brought home for the feeble one; but O, how strong is the power of the intoxicating cup! It binds its victims with more than iron bands; and how eagerly it forges new and stronger chains if it sees them struggling to be free!

Thus it was with Edward Lee. The power of habit was strong, and appetite loud in its demands. His old companions in his drunken haunts assailed him on every side; and soon he rushed more madly than ever down the steep and rugged hill of degradation.

CHAPTER XIX.

LONG AND DISTRESSING SICKNESS OF LITTLE JOHNNY. — HIS PATIENCE AND SUBMISSION. — HIS HAPPY AND TRIUMPHANT DEATH. — THE VISIT OF SQUIRE HAYNES. — MIKE THOMPSON'S GRIEF. — LITTLE JOHNNY'S REQUIEM.

Two months have passed away since that trying night at the inebriate's hut. Little Johnny has continued to fail ever since ; and Mrs. Lee can do nothing but sit and hold him near the fire. As far as human eye can see, it would have been better for the child had death snapped at once the cords of life, and the angels of love and mercy, who were still hovering there, conveyed his sinless soul to their own blessed abode. But "the ways of God are not as our ways," and often "are past finding out." Already the patient sufferings of the dying child have been blessed to those around him ; to all but his wretched father he has been a messenger of heavenly love. He has taught them patience and submission under heavy trials, and has talked of heaven, of God, and the holy angels, of his brother and baby sister who have gone before him, of the bright,

warm sky, and the pretty flowers he should gather in the home to which he was hastening.

O, how meekly he has borne his sufferings when his father has returned intoxicated, raving, and cursing his innocent family! How sweetly, in whispered accents, he has told them of another and better home, where there would be no rum, and every body would be so glad and happy!

One day, after having a very distressed turn, he said, "I am going to that happy home, mamma. O, when will my Savior come and take me in his arms as he did the little children you told me of the other day?"

Many times during his sickness he reproved his father when he heard him take the name of God in vain. Some, when they came there to drink, as they listened to his sweet, young voice, as in mildest accents he said, "Please don't drink that; it is naughty stuff, and will make you say very, very wicked words, and God will not love you if you do," have felt they were listening to a voice from the spirit land, and have turned away and left their cups untasted.

One poor victim of intemperance ascribed his reformation to the words of heavenly wisdom which fell from the lips of this little child. Said he to a friend a few years after, "I never took a glass of rum or uttered an oath, afterwards, but that I could see that angelic face turned pleadingly towards me, and the voice of conscience would whisper, 'God will not love you if you do.' I resolved to reform; and, thank God, I am now free."

Let us take another look behind the curtain. Johnny is passing rapidly away. He is lying in his mother's lap; for there is no crib or cradle in the inebriate's hut. Already he looks like an ethereal spirit released from its material form as his pure soul shines brightly forth from his heavenly eyes. -

"Johnny is almost tired: ask God to take him home, mamma." A tear fell on the transparent hand of the sufferer. Looking up with a saddened brow, he said, "Don't cry, mamma! Johnny will stay a little while longer. Let Johnny kiss you."

He wipes the tear away from his mother's eye with his tiny, feeble hand.

Nellie is preparing a potato, the mealiest and the best, for Johnny; for, like most consumptives, his appetite has been great during his sickness. He has had but few of those delicacies which are so grateful to the invalid; and sometimes even the necessities of life have been denied him, much to the sorrow of his mother and gentle sister.

Consumption! Who that has watched its progress from day to day, as it has preyed upon the vitals of a beloved one, even when surrounded by the luxuries of wealth, does not tremble at the mention of that name, and offer up a prayer that they may be saved from again witnessing the sad spectacle?

What, then, must Mrs. Lee and her daughter have suffered during this long, dreary winter? On their own wants and hardships they had scarcely bestowed a thought; but to see that little helpless one suffering so much from

disease, and not be able to minister to his physical wants, has been doubly trying to them. They have done all in their power—denied themselves sleep, and many times food. And yet they cannot even have the satisfaction of knowing that their beloved one was made as comfortable as he might have been.

Even Freddie has lost his buoyant, blustering ways, and moves about the room with noiseless steps. But for him they must have suffered much for fuel; for many long, weary nights the fire has not gone out upon the hearth. Day after day he has scoured the woods and fields in every direction; and thus far their wants have been supplied.

It was evident that Johnny could not long survive; and now from that home of destitution, made destitute by man's cupidity, went up a prayer of penitence and deep humility. "Father, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Take back the jewel thou didst give me and place it in the Savior's crown; for O, I am unworthy of so rich a gift; this is no place for gems so rare as this. Then take my infant in thine everlasting arms and bear him to yon starry worlds of light. I ask it in the name of Him who died that we might live."

Fainter and fainter grows that feeble voice—shorter and shorter breathes the dying child: and now all feel that Death has come at last to claim its own.

"Freddie," said Mrs. Lee, "run quick to the bar room and tell father that Johnny is dying! Tell him to come directly, or he will not see him living. O, for the world I would not fail to have him here! Johnny, darling! you

are going home now. Do you know mamma?" The dying infant smiled.

Nellie knelt at her mother's side and smoothed back the dark, shining curls, and impressed many kisses on his marble brow.

"Think you, Nellie, we cannot send a message to our beloved dead?" said Mrs. Lee. "How sweet the thought that it were so! And yet I think they must be near us now. I feel their presence comforting and consoling me. Is it not so with you, my child?"

Now the father enters; and, approaching his child, he calls him by his name. But he shrinks back affrighted from him, and clings to his mother's bosom. The father turns away in anger, saying, "You have learned your lesson well."

"Johnny, don't you know your father?" said his mother.

"Johnny is God's boy now," gasped the child. Then, with a look of ineffable sweetness, he pointed his little faded finger to heaven, exclaiming, "See! see! see!"

"What, my precious child?"

"A light! I cannot see you, mamma; but there is a pretty light."

Nellie and Freddie are now weeping violently. The sound seemed to recall the happy spirit back to earth. Reaching out his arms as if in search of something, his little face wore a saddened look.

"Your weeping disturbs him. Restrain your grief for a while," said the mother.

Each took a hand and pressed a last kiss upon his cheek. A bright, angelic smile rests on that radiant brow, radiant with the light and love of heaven. He has been wasting like the light of day upon the western skies — fading from earth like the beautiful bow from the bright-blue arch of heaven. One by one the golden threads of life have been sundered ; tie after tie has been severed ; little by little the spirit has been disenthralled from earth ; and now the material doors are thrown silently open, and his weary spirit takes its flight to its home beyond the skies. As the tired infant sinks to sleep, so passed the spirit of little Johnny Lee.

For a few moments all is silent ; the stillness of death is there. The father's head is bowed, and conscience is trying to be heard in the silence of that hour. Why sits the mother thus silent and motionless ? Her soul has been filled with awe. Bright visions from the spirit world have been hovering near ; she has felt their presence ; and now, while the veil is raised and the spirit of her child is passing through, she has been watching for one glimpse beyond this vale of tears.

Kind neighbors have now arrived ; and the little form is shrouded for the tomb. Beautiful even in death is the lovely boy ; and, although no chaplet of fading flowers is twined around his brow, who shall say there was not a crown of glory laid up for him above ? O Death, thou art indeed a strange, mysterious visitant. In the cottage of the poor and the palace of the rich thou bringest the same sad train.

The lonely hut is now filled to overflowing ; many tears are shed over the sleeping child ; for, now that he is gone, all remember that he was a lovely boy. They are ready, now that he needs them not, to lend a helping hand.

Squire Haynes, too, is there. He wants to show his sympathy, or possibly, he fears, he may lose another customer. At all events, it is the first time he has called since they have occupied the hut. Now, in patronizing tones, he says, "You have met with a very great loss, Mrs. Lee. That was a promising boy of yours. I hope you are reconciled to the will of Providence."

Mrs. Lee felt that this was more than she could bear. His presence at any time would have brought back to her mind images of departed joys and happier days ; but to receive the heartless sympathy of such a man at this time was terrible indeed. She arose and pointed to the bier. "Look there!" she said, in a voice scarcely above a whisper, "look there! It is a loss to lose so fair a child. 'Twas hard to give him up ; but it was harder still to know that he was robbed, robbed of a father's love and care, and sent by cold neglect and want down to an early grave. You ask if I am reconciled. I am, when God afflicts ; but look around my wretched home, and tell me, was it thus when first you came within my door? Ah, no! Mine was a happy home, and peace and plenty filled our hearts with joy. But the spoiler has been here, and the serpent's track is seen on all around. Canst thou tell me who the tempter was? But no ; I will not taunt you here. This is no place for taunts. But here, in the pres-

ence of the dead and in the name of Heaven, I beseech you to give me back my husband and my home ! ”

“ Madam, I know not what you mean. It is true, I sell ardent spirits ; but, if your husband is intemperate, it is his fault, not mine. If I don't sell it to him, he will get it somewhere else. Good day, madam. I am sorry for your affliction ; but my calling is an honest one, and to those who pay me well I cannot refuse to sell. Good day, all.”

Mike Thompson, another of the squire's victims, while sitting in the corner has been listening to the agonized words of that injured wife until his heart has been softened and his broad chest heaved with emotion. Drawing his rough hand across his eyes, he exclaims, “ What a confounded fool I am to be snivelling in this way ! But there ; I can't help it. I wish I was half as happy as that 'ere child there, or ever like to be.” And, taking out a new half dollar, he slipped it into the hand of Mrs. Lee. “ There ; I wish it was as much again. I've drank ten times more than that here ; but I've done ; and, if I don't pay it all back, then I'll be d——d ! But no ; I'll not swear here,” looking towards the coffin. “ If I'd had a wife and child like that, I shouldn't have made such a cussed fool of myself, I know. But there ; I'll go now ; for I can't say any thing that is fit to be said in this place.” Going to the door, he paused. Looking at the coffin which stood on the table, then down on the floor, he said, “ Mrs. Lee, if it ain't taking too much liberty, I should like to go to the grave to-morrow.”

“ Certainly, certainly, Mr. Thompson. You were ever

a favorite with the child ; and, now that you are endeavoring to reform, I shall be happy to have you here."

"There ; I am at it again !" said Mike, starting off in a hurry. "How confounded silly I've grown all at once, to be crying in this way !"

Poor man ! he mistakes those feelings of sympathy for weakness. Reason is again returning to occupy her deserted throne. As yet he does not comprehend the change that is passing over him, and feels ashamed and vexed at himself for manifesting emotions which he of late has looked upon as unmanly.

Mr. Lee has now been gone several hours. His return is looked for with much anxiety, with many hopes and fears, by those at home.

It had once been the custom to pass around spirits of some kind at funerals. Almost every one had abandoned the practice ; but Mr. Lee thought a little of something to drink would be indispensable. His wife had besought him with tears not to purchase any. "No one will expect it, Edward, from those in our reduced circumstances ; they know we can't afford it."

"Perhaps they won't," was his reply ; and so she scarcely knew what to expect. But now he is heard approaching, and their doubts will soon be solved ; for he enters with a gallon runlet under his arm.

"O father !" exclaimed Nellie, "I thought you was not going to get any !"

"Who told you so ? Catch me doing such a mean trick as that !"

No one made any reply to this ; they saw it would be in vain. He had taken just a glass or two to help him bear his loss ; he had drank just enough to make him feel abused and deeply injured. He accused his wife of setting the children against him ; of spending all he earned faster than he could earn it, so that he could not have a decent suit of clothes ; and, what was worse than all, they lied about him to the neighbors ; and nobody but the squire had hardly spoken to him ; nobody had brought him any thing to wear.

Thus until a late hour the weary family were compelled to listen to abuse like this. O, how sweet to their aching hearts would have been the solitude of a dungeon, even, compared with this ! With subdued hearts and weary limbs they at length retired to rest.

Morning dawns, cold and dreary. At the appointed hour the hut is filled with sympathizing friends and a few curious gazers. A short prayer and a few remarks are listened to with attention, and the funeral train moves on to the burial ground : and now they stand beside the open grave. The coffin lid is again raised, and the mother gazes long, as if she fain would fix each feature upon the tablet of her soul. Amid the tears of the brother and sisters the coffin is lowered into its last resting-place ; and the mourners turn away to their deserted home.

Sleep on, dear little Johnny Lee,
Secure from pain and woe !
No sorrow in that blest abode
Shall thy pure spirit know.

Thou hast left thy tattered garments here,
With all thy wrongs and woes ;
Thou wearest a shining garment there,
In that land of sweet repose.

Thou art gone to that land of warmth and light
Where thy spirit has longed to be ;
Where all are good ; and angels bright
With joy shall care for thee.

No marble slab or monument
Shall tell where thou art laid ;
But thou shalt roam, in fields of light,
'Mid flowers that never fade.

Farewell, sweet little Johnny Lee !
We'll miss thee much and long ;
But thou hast changed those notes of woe
For those of sweeter song.

CHAPTER XX.

CAPTAIN THOMPSON VISITS HIS NATIVE LAND.—HIS DEEP SORROW AT THE MISFORTUNES OF HIS EARLY FRIEND.—HE MEETS WITH A LONG-LOST COUSIN.

HAD you been on one of the wharves of a northern city a few days previous to the death of little Johnny, you might have seen a beautiful vessel cautiously making her way to one of the piers. She was well manned and splendidly rigged ; and her white sails were floating gracefully in the morning breeze.

It is evident that she is a stranger, from the inquiries that passed from lip to lip, "Who is she? Where does she hail from?" As she neared the harbor, her name and destination were borne from ear to ear by the same fresh breeze that played so gracefully with her sails—"The Lady Alice, from Liverpool."

Could you have entered this noble ship and found your way to the captain's private room, you might have seen him,—although surrounded by all the appliances of wealth,—alone, wrestling with some hidden grief. Locking his door, he took a small golden locket from his bosom

and gazed with mournful sadness on a youthful female face.

"Many long, weary years have fled, dear idol of my heart! since we have met, and I have changed in all things but my love for thee, and that is buried deep down in my inmost soul. None but the Ruler of the destinies of men has known how deep, and pure, and strong the cords of love which bound my youthful heart to thee. If I but find thee happy, then I am blessed, and will return once more to other lands, not to forget thee, not to murmur at my lot, but to rejoice with thee."

The boat at length arrived ; and Francis Thompson (for he it is we recognize in the captain) started immediately for his native town. It was with a sad and aching heart he entered his childhood's home. His venerable father had gone to join his sainted mother in the spirit world. The old arm chair is vacant now ; and he who has been honored and caressed in foreign lands seats himself in it, and weeps as he has not wept for many, many years.

O, what a flood of memories came rushing over his soul ! sweet memories of a beloved mother, of childhood, and of a father's tender watchfulness, of sisters dear, and brothers well-beloved, who shared with him the joys and sorrows of his home.

"O, it is sad to see our childhood's home made desolate by death!" thought Captain Thompson, as he gazed on all the old, familiar scenes of youth. What now to him were all the honors he had won ? He fain would give them all to meet once more his loved ones in his early home. But

his was not a selfish nature : others had their claims upon him ; and he forgot them not. Old friends were taken cordially by the hand, kind words were spoken, and many tokens of friendship brought from a foreign shore were distributed.

One thought, however, was uppermost in his mind — he longed to hear of her who was his playmate and his cherished, chosen friend. " Can I meet her parents and not betray my secret ? " was the query of his soul. " I think I can ; yes, if all is well, I know I can," he thought.

They met him with a friendly grasp, while tears unbidden started to their eyes. Mrs. May wept long before she could speak ; but to the eye of love the cause was plain ; and Captain Thompson's lip trembled as he said, " Your daughter, — what of her ? "

Mrs. May saw the strong man wrestling with emotion, and sought to relieve him, by saying, " O, no ; she is not dead, my poor, poor child. Sometimes I think it were better if she were ; but God, no doubt, knows best ; at least we try to think so."

" Seeing you has made a fool of me, I believe," said the worthy farmer, as he bowed his head upon his sunburnt hands and remained silent for a few minutes. Then, brushing away the tears, he told a tale that might have made a common listener weep. But Captain Thompson had not a tear to shed. His face was pale and rigid, and his voice low and husky, as he asked, " Will she not return to her early home ? "

" We have tried," said the mother, looking up through

her tears, — “ we have tried to have her come back to us ; but it is all in vain. We have done all that we could to alleviate her sufferings ; but it is of no use. The more we do for her, the more unkindly he treats her ; and she has begged us to desist. We have done so, partly on that account, and hoping every day that she will be induced to turn to us, with her children. Lately he has forbidden us to visit her ; and for two or three months we have not seen our child. God alone knows what we have suffered,” said Mrs. May ; and her voice was almost lost in convulsive sobs.

Captain Thompson left the stricken parents in silence and in grief, resolving to visit his early friend on the following morning, fervently praying that he might be permitted to alleviate her condition, if nothing more.

He arrived at Squire Haynes’s hotel, and was standing in front of it, when Mr. Lee and his family, with a few neighbors, were returning from the grave of little Johnny. He paused for a moment to gaze upon the solemn train. “ Another home has been bereaved,” he thought, “ and other hearts than mine made sad ; but they, it is evident, are poor, while I am rich. I wish I knew them,” thought the generous man, as he looked with eager earnestness at a fair young girl who had raised her head and was then looking at him. “ Those eyes,” he mused, — “ they speak to me of other days : can it, can it be ? O, no ; that brutal-looking man can never be the husband of a pure and virtuous wife. No, no.”

In spite of this conclusion, the heart of Captain Thompson beat hard and fast ; and, as Mike Thompson left the procession and stepped upon the piazza, he resolved to make some inquiries of him. "Good morning, friend," said he. "I presume you reside in this part of the town?"

"Yes, sir," said Mike, bowing a little awkwardly.

"Do you know a family by the name of Lee in this neighborhood?" said the captain.

"Yes, sir ; there they go,"—and he pointed to the funeral procession,—"there they go ; that's what's left of 'em. Two of the smartest, handsomest, brightest boys you ever saw have died since last fall, besides the baby, poor thing! who was always sick like."

Captain Thompson had not heard much of this information, for his face and thoughts were turned towards her he had so fondly loved. He was not prepared to meet her thus : she was much more wretched than he had supposed. The faint, sick feeling that at first passed over him had gone ; and he turned towards the speaker and thanked him for his information, remarking, in a careless manner, "I once knew the friends of Mrs. Lee ; and, if you are at leisure this afternoon, I should like to learn something more concerning her family."

"Sartain ; to be sure," said Mike. "Hain't got much to do nowadays, but mean to have before long. I worked over there in that ere shop ten years for Mr. Lee ; done some nice work, I guess ; reckon I can tell you as much about them as any body."

"No doubt of it," said the captain; "but you resemble an uncle of mine who went out west. May I inquire your name, sir?"

Mike's eyes flew wide open and sparkled a little as he answered, "Michael Thompson, sir."

"And your father's name?"

"Was Francis Thompson; he lived in the western part of Massachusetts," replied Mike.

The captain took him warmly by the hand, saying, "I have found a long-lost cousin, sir; and you, if you choose, will find in me a true friend. My name is Francis Thompson: our fathers were brothers. Be assured I am happy to meet you, sir."

That day Mike had looked for the last time upon the child who had warned him: his heart had been growing soft; and now the fountain of his tears had been broken up: great drops were running down his faded cheeks. "I'm a great fool," said he, "and have been these six years: it won't be no honor to you to claim relation to such a drinking curse as I am. But I've done; they don't get any more of the pisen stuff into me nohow. I've seen enough of that lately," said Mike, brightening up a little.

"I am glad to hear it. Come, walk in; we will dine together."

Mike hesitated, and looked at his shabby clothes.

"Never mind your dress," said the captain, gayly. "Haul-to and cast anchor with me for a while. After dinner we will talk about these things."

He then entered his name as Captain Thompson, from Liverpool, ordered dinner for two, and called for a private room.

"Any wine or brandy?" asked the waiter, as he saw them seated at the table.

"No, I thank you," said the captain; and, turning towards Mike, he added, "In Europe I have always been in the habit of taking some kind of spirit with my dinner; but to-day I have seen the painful effects of the sparkling bowl, and I have resolved never again to taste the tempting beverage."

"Amen!" responded Mike.

It was a novel sight to see the polished, gentlemanly, well-dressed captain seated at the same table with the victim of intemperance. Poor Mike felt out of place. He could not but see the surprise of the waiters and the covert sneers his appearance called forth. He felt his degradation more than he had ever done when drinking and carousing in the bar room; but he was resolved to fight his way back to honesty and manhood.

Dinner being over, the captain invited him to ride to the next village and give him a history of the Lees since their marriage.

It was a painful task for Mike; for his own history was so intimately connected with that of Mr. Lee, that, as he proceeded with his story, his voice would sometimes almost break down and his rough hand would be drawn stealthily across his eyes.

As Captain Thompson listened to the touching tale of

the wrongs, and, as it seemed to him, unparalleled sufferings, of his early friend, he was filled with mingled emotions of pity, indignation, and compassion. As the narrator dwelt largely on the beauty and goodness of Mrs. Lee, her patient endurance of all her trials, the meed of praise from honest lips fell like healing balm on the eager listener's ear.

"Then she was worthy of my love," he thought, "and worthy of a better fate. O, could I claim a brother's right, she should be happy yet! God grant she may!"

It was evening when the cousins returned. Mike was dressed in a new suit of broadcloth, and a feeling of self-respect was creeping back into his heart. On their way home he pointed out to the captain the miserable abode of Alice Lee. Both hearts were filled with painful apprehension as they saw the doctor's carriage standing before the door and several women running to and fro.

"Any one dangerously sick here?" inquired the captain of one of them.

"Yes, sir," said the woman, sadly. "Mrs. Lee is very sick with brain fever, and has been raving ever since noon to-day. The doctor thinks there is no chance for her." And the woman hurried on.

"Poor, poor thing!" said Mike. "I knew it would come to this. That cursed old squire is living in the great house where she ought to be this minute: he'll be cursed; you see if he ain't. I don't mean to swear, cap'n; but somehow I feel just like it when I think of the injury he's done that family and a good many other families, to say

nothing of myself. It's enough to make a better man than I am swear ; 'tain't in natur to help it."

The captain thought pretty much so too ; for his own heart was almost boiling over with indignation, and he felt like calling down the vengeance of Heaven upon the cruel wretch. But he replied, "No, no, my friend ; we will not curse him. 'Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord.' Let us leave him, then."

As he had listened to Mike's story he felt a deep and growing interest in his newly-found cousin, and resolved to take him to Europe if he could persuade him to go. He found no great difficulty in this ; for Mike had been a sailor in his younger days, and was pleased with the idea of going.

"I shall get away from that land shark," said he. "I've nobody at home to cry if I should get rolled overboard some day. I'll try it, at any rate."

Captain Thompson was glad to be alone once more, that he might indulge his grief. How he longed to fly to the bedside of his early friend, to soothe her pains and call her back to life and happiness again ! It was late when he retired that night ; but he arose at early dawn, determined to look upon her faded form once more. But he must see the doctor first.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DISTRESSING SICKNESS OF MRS. LEE. — THE CAPTAIN'S VISIT AND KINDNESS. — HER HUSBAND'S BRUTAL TREATMENT. — HER FINAL RECOVERY.

LET us return to the afflicted family, whom we left on their way home from little Johnny's grave.

Mrs. Lee had watched over her declining child with a mother's tender solicitude. Three times in less than a year she had wept over her dying ones. Three lovely children she had laid in the silent grave. A mountain of affliction had passed over her ; and now her frail form was bowed beneath the accumulated weight.

The reader will remember her touching appeal to Squire Haynes on the evening previous to the funeral. His cold repulse fell like heated iron upon her weary brain. She saw the hopes of her husband's reform dashed in a moment to the ground ; she staggered beneath the dreadful blow. Mechanically she had followed the little corpse ; with glazed eyes and throbbing temples, she had gazed for the last time on her sweetly-sleeping boy. She was hardly conscious of her sufferings. Like a shadow

of her former self she returns to her deserted home, and in a few hours is wildly delirious.

Calling incessantly for her husband and buried children, there she lies, prostrate and helpless. The fever, like some mighty fire, leaping from vein to vein, scorches and burns up her life. She imagines herself bound down with iron bonds, while a slow, sure fire is consuming her frame. But even now she is true to her nature — pleading, persuading, but never blaming.

The native energy and self-possession of Nellie are again called into exercise. Like a ministering spirit she glides about from place to place, soothing her affrighted brother and sister and supplying the wants of her suffering mother. It was painful to see those lines of care, and calm, silent sadness upon her fair young brow. All night she watched beside the couch of pain, listening to the wailing voice whose mournful appeals in the stillness of the night fell like funereal dirges upon her startled ear. O, what a lonely vigil for such a child in years! Many times during the night she has looked towards the east, to catch the first bright rays of breaking day; and now, when morning dawns, it finds her at her post, waiting and hoping on for the dawn of reason in her mother's mind.

Early in the morning Captain Thompson called on Dr. Drew and made known his wish to help the suffering family in a private manner. The doctor was a keen observer, and readily understood the state of affairs. Feeling a strong interest in his patient and her family, he heartily engaged in planning to bring about the desired

result. That being accomplished, the captain inquired, with some hesitation, "Can I visit your patient with you?"

"Certainly," said the doctor; "an old, familiar face may call back her scattered senses. Come; I am going now. Be calm," said he, as they drew near the hut.

"Well, Nellie, how has your patient rested to-night?"

"She has not rested at all, sir," she replied.

"Good morning, Mrs. Lee. So you are awake? That's right; for I have brought an old friend to see you."

"Awake!" replied the invalid. "O, yes; I am awake. Think you that I could sleep on this burning rack? O, no. Put out the fire, good doctor," she said, in a beseeching tone, "or break these iron bonds. Did you say a friend had come? I'll see: no friend would see me tortured thus for nought. Put out the fire!" she shrieked, "or break the iron bonds! O God! is there no pity in your souls, that you thus taunt me with your cold, calm looks? You know that I am guilty of no crime." Then, in accents of despair, she cried, "If you cannot save me, then pile the fagots high! Quick! let me die! and I will bless you with my latest breath."

She paused, exhausted: the doctor turned away to make a new prescription: he had not one faint hope, and yet he felt obliged to give her something.

Captain Thompson obeyed the impulse of his heart; and, bending over the sufferer, he called her name in the old, familiar accent of other days. "Alice! do you not know me? Do you not know your brother?"

"My brother!" she murmured. "O, no. I had a brother once; but he is dead. He died long years ago. O, how I loved him when my heart was young! Poor, poor Frank! He is buried in the sea."

But now she raves once more; and Captain Thompson feels that this is more than he can bear. Speaking in a low tone to the doctor, he hurriedly left the hut. Her father and mother shall see her," thought he, starting immediately to bring them.

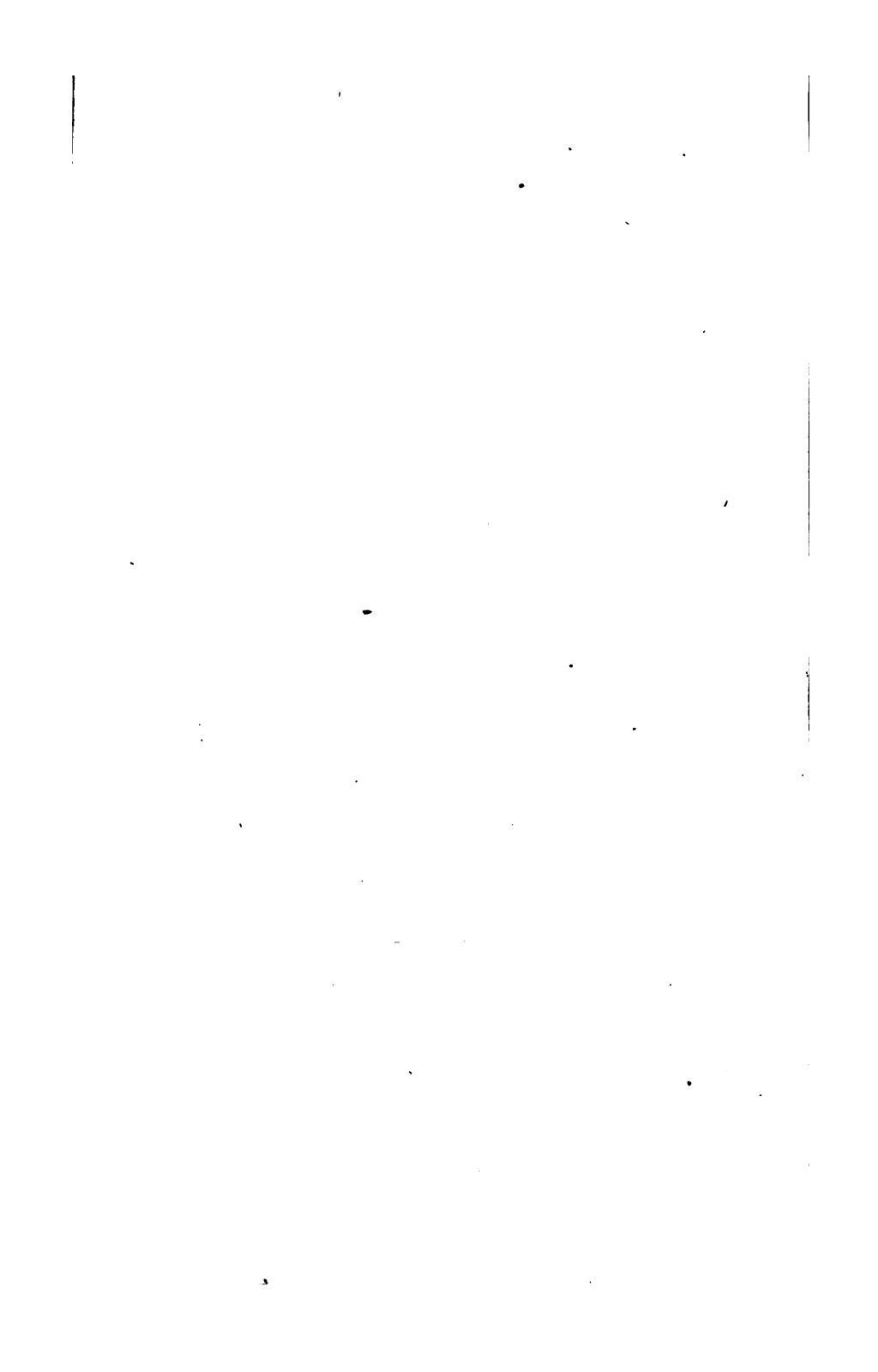
In the course of a few hours, every thing which it was possible to do under the circumstances to make the family comfortable was done and a good nurse provided to assist Nellie; for money is a wonderful spoke in the wheel of life, and Captain Thompson had said, "Spare no expense: I have enough."

But the fallen husband, — where is he? Humanity would answer, At the bedside of his suffering wife. But no; he is not there. Edward Lee is now staggering home from the dram shop, where he went last night to drown his recent trouble. He is beastly drunk: not even the presence of a stranger can calm his frenzied brain. He listens with anger to the moaning, pleading voice of his wife; and, as she raised her hands entreatingly towards him and prayed in accents wild to have him quench the fire, he fiercely caught a pail of water from the hearth and madly dashed it on he bed. "There! take that! Now stop your thundering jaw!"

The younger children screamed: the nurse ran wildly to the door, as if to call for help. "Come back," said



"There! take that! Now stop your thundering jaw!" p. 138.



Nellie; "it is all too late; it is over now; she is dead! My mother! O my angel mother! would that I could die with you! O, take me with you! Look!" she said to her father, in deep, solemn tones. "You have killed her!"

The wife and mother, who had lain pale and motionless as a block of marble, now showed signs of returning life: she opened her eyes languidly, and reason beamed mildly forth. Finding herself thoroughly drenched, she called Nellie to her side to learn the cause. The thoughtful child told her "she had been sick; the doctor had been there, and would be again soon," without answering her question; for Freddie had been despatched to bring him and tell him what had happened. But now he entered with a serious face and looked with much surprise upon the calm and quiet invalid. Taking her hand, he seemed more puzzled still. "What's this!" he thought. "Her fever gone! Her pulse is weak, but very good; her reason has returned. 'Tis strange — 'tis passing strange."

Now, the good doctor had heard of "water cure," but had looked upon it as one of the numerous humbugs of the age. He was forced to admit, however, to himself at least, that the "pail of water" had done wonders in this case; at any rate, he could attribute the change in Mrs. Lee to nothing else. Had he listened to the voice of Nature, as it spoke so loudly through the frenzied mother's lips, he might have learned a lesson then not easily forgotten.

Mrs. Lee slowly recovered under the watchful care of

Nellie and Dr. Drew ; for the latter had learned the salutary lesson, that Nature, unassisted, will do more for the sick than when assisted in the wrong way.

The patient was so weak, however, that, when Captain Thompson returned with her parents, they were not allowed to visit her for several days. At length, after suitable preparation, they were admitted. The meeting between them was sweetly sad ; there was much they wished to say ; their hearts were full ; but they must be silent now. As Mrs. Lee felt her mother's lips upon hers and the warm pressure of her father's hand, a feeling of security and happiness, which had long been unknown to her, diffused its healing balm over her sinking soul.

Her convalescence was now more rapid. It was decided that Mrs. Lee and Susie should spend several weeks with her parents, while Nellie supplied the place of housekeeper to her father, who had shown some signs of contrition for a few days past.

Captain Thompson sailed before Mr. and Mrs. May returned home. It was not thought advisable for him to visit Mrs. Lee in her present feeble state of health ; and his visit was kept a profound secret. This was not difficult ; for no member of the family knew who it was who came with the doctor, and she was allowed to attribute the many comforts that surrounded her to the munificence of her father. When he told her "a better home was prepared for herself and family as soon as she was able to remove there," she thanked him with one of her own sweet smiles.

CHAPTER XXII.

MAINE LAW AGITATION.—THE RENEWED FAITH AND HOPE OF MRS. LEE.—THE TRIUMPH OF THE MAINE LAW.—DISTRESSING SICKNESS OF MR. LEE.—HIS RECOVERY AND REFORMATION.

THREE months have passed away. The home of Edward Lee is humble yet ; but, compared with the miserable hut which they had so recently left, it was comfortable and very convenient.

Mrs. Lee was calm and resigned, for she put her trust in God ; and daily, nay, almost hourly, her prayers go up to Heaven for the erring one ; and as she prays her faith grows strong. She felt that her prayers and agonizing tears of worse than widowed hearts had reached Jehovah's throne ; and she believed that a mighty arm was raised to save her husband, and many such as he, from the drunkard's grave.

Her native state was even then waging a terrible warfare against intemperance. With the eye of faith she saw the dawn of coming day. O, will such trust be vain ? We shall see.

Let us turn our attention for a moment to the fiend who

brought about this ruin. From the time he drove the hapless family from their home, he had not prospered in his iniquitous business. Gambling debts had accumulated ; already the shop had been disposed of ; and Mr. Lee had, therefore, been thrown out of employment ; consequently he had no money.

But hark ! that sound of jubilee, that mighty shout, that shakes the towering hills of good old Maine, and is borne along from vale to vale by the swift-winged messengers that girt our land ! Let us catch the echoes as they pass along. "The battle has been fought ; and the demon of intemperance lies wounded and bleeding on the battle field. Arise, O friends of virtue and religion, and trample the huge, bloody monster in the dust ! Strike now ! nor cease your sturdy stroke until the hateful reptile shall be ground to atoms, and those atoms buried in the lowest depths of earth, and a monument erected on the spot, with streaming banners floating in every direction, bearing the inscription, 'Maine Liquor Law,' now, and until every vestige of intemperance shall be swept away !"

"Yes ; the friends of temperance have gained the greatest victory that they have ever achieved in our native land. The "Maine liquor law" has been engraven in indelible characters on the great hearts of her children ; and the united voice of thanks and praise of millions now on earth were borne by happy spirits to the courts of heaven. May the echo be rolled along until millions yet unborn shall catch the inspiring sounds !

How like a beauteous morning star that law arose to

the longing gaze of Alice Lee! Her prayer was heard; and, although her tears fall fast and her voice is silent, her gratitude is known to Him who seeth the secrets of all hearts.

But it fell like a thunderbolt upon the penurious, heartless rumseller. Squire Haynes, especially, winced and fretted beneath the galling yoke of justice and human brotherhood. He cursed the law and the framers of the law, and swore by all the powers beneath that he would break it whenever he could without detection. He could not sell, of course, to men who were known to be intemperate; and Mr. Lee was such a one. Besides, he had no money; and he was glad to be rid of him. Consequently he told him, in his usual snakelike fashion, "that the law was such that he could not possibly supply him with liquor any longer. He was sorry to say it; it was a mean, contemptible law, a disgrace to the state; but the penalty was such that he dared not break it."

Edward Lee went home in a towering rage. The cravings of his appetite were horrible in the extreme; his sufferings were very great. He saw no way of escape; he had no money; his credit was gone; and he felt as if there was nothing left for him but to "curse God and die."

This was indeed a trying time for poor Mrs. Lee. Hopes and fears were struggling in her bosom; she tried in every way to soothe and encourage her husband; and, when a few days had passed and reason was in a measure restored, he began to appreciate her tender thought-

fulness and reflected bitterly upon his past life. As reason became more fully established, the retrospect became more and more painful. At first he seemed like one just awakened from an exceedingly troubled sleep. He could not realize that he had sunk so low ; but, as time passed on and conviction sunk deep into his soul, the fire which had been burning him up, fed by the rumseller's remorseless hand, raged on with unabated fury, although the supply of fuel had ceased. Edward Lee presented a spectacle painful to look upon. His powerful frame looked like some mighty oak stripped of its leaves and branches by the lightning's blast ; and his wife now trembled lest he might go down to a drunkard's grave.

Courage, faithful wife ! Look up once more for strength. A trying scene awaits thee ; but thou shalt reap a rich reward. It is midnight. The inebriate is held by three stout men. Their united strength is barely sufficient to restrain him from deeds of violence. To his disordered imagination demons are hurling fiery serpents over his head, whose venomous tongues are sinking deep into his bosom. Scream after scream, curse after curse, fall on the affrighted listener's ear. With almost giant strength he writhes and struggles to get free. But now some superhuman power has dragged him forth, and by his hair he is suspended over a burning lake. Again he shrieks and shrinks away with looks of keenest horror ; and now he pants and sinks back as if exhausted. Again his glassy eyes are peering forth into the darkest corner of the room, whilst a shade of convulsive agony passes through

his frame. He begs and pleads for mercy in wildest accents ; but to him it seems in vain. On, on they come, those demons, with their flaming torches, mocking and laughing at his woe. He hurls the bitterest curses the lips of mortals ever could utter forth. Now the wretched victim feels them tugging at his limbs, and one by one they are wrenched and torn away. His agonizing groans are terrible. At length he thinks he is killed : exhausted nature refuses to struggle longer with the dreadful disease ; and he is completely prostrated.

"Now is our time," said Dr. Drew ; "we will lay him in the pack. It is wonderful what a power there is in water in such cases ; it works like a charm in a fever of the brain."

The sick man slept many hours ; then he awoke more calm, but entirely unconscious. A fever is raging in his veins : his system is so full of impurities that Nature will need careful assistance in order to recover herself. On the fourth day the fever was at its height ; and the doctor shook his head as Mrs. Lee inquired "what he thought."

"We will try to save him," he replied. "Should he show signs of returning reason, he must be kept perfectly quiet. Admit no one but your daughter till I see him again."

Hour after hour the sick man slept on : still the faithful wife ceased not her weary watching ; and Nellie moved around so silently that she seemed more like a spirit than an earthly being. With noiseless step she performed her allotted task. So intense were the feelings of both mother

and daughter that even their breathing was hushed. Like two guardian angels they hovered around the sick man's couch ; now moistening his parched lips with Nature's beverage ; now changing carefully, one by one, the wet towels that enveloped his fevered limbs.

Little Susie is absent. Freddie, fortunately for him, by the good influence of his mother and sister, has been saved from the pernicious effects of his father's example ; and his character, by the trying dispensations of the past year, has been rapidly developed. He now enters on tiptoe, and, going to his mother's side, gazes wistfully on his father. A few pearly drops were glistening in his eyes as he whispered, " Lie down, dear mother ! Nellie and I will watch by him ; " for he had heard some kind neighbors say to each other that morning that his poor mother " would kill herself, going without food and sleep in that way. It was all nonsense ; some one else might stay with him just as well, if she only thought so." And now she looks so pale and sad it makes his heart ache to look at her.

" Thank you, my son," she said, laying her hand caressingly on his head ; " father may awake soon and want me ; I must not leave him now."

The doctor is now bending over him, and his practised eye discovers a happy change. " Work on," he whispered ; hope on ; for, when he wakes, the husband and father of former days will be here."

The crisis has passed. Soon the look of intense suffering fades away ; his skin becomes soft and moist ; his pulse is feeble, but regular ; a smile plays round his parted lips,

and murmured words of love come gushing forth. The watchers hold their breath ; and, bending low their heads, they listen to catch the sound. O, what a moment of agonizing suspense to them ! Was this the mysterious work of Death ?

A change gradually passed over the sufferer ; every vestige of bloating and fever had disappeared. He was deathly pale and thin ; but the expression of his face was peaceful, and he slept quietly and breathed softly as an infant. Would he pass away thus, or wake to life once more ? Hush ! hush ! he speaks again.

"You see these brawny arms," he said. "With these and my good riding whip I do not fear ; and you need not, my little, fluttering, timid bride."

Mrs. Lee made no outward demonstration whatever ; but those broken sentences fell like sweetest music from an angel's harp upon her overburdened soul. Those words, whose tones had filled her heart with pleasure when uttered in her childhood's home, were now thrice dear. She sank down quietly beside the bed ; and, covering her face for a moment, she felt almost lost in a labyrinth of delicious joy. "He is dreaming of our youthful love," thought she, "when he was pure ; and I, — O, what a wealth of happiness was mine !"

Again the sick man breathes her name. "Alice ! dear Alice ! will you not be mine, mine soon, and ever ?" And ere the whispered words had died away he awoke, raised his hand feebly to his head, and looked inquiringly upon

his wife and child. "How came I here?" he said, as he looked upon his emaciated hands.

Mrs. Lee bowed her head and whispered, for she could not trust her voice, "You have been very, very sick; you are better now, but are too weak to talk; dear husband, do not attempt it." She tenderly smoothed back the matted hair and soothed him to repose again.

After an hour he awoke. He now comprehends his situation fully; and it is only by the most endearing and soothing attentions from his family that he was kept calm and quiet long enough to gain a firm hold of life.

Dr. Drew was a goodhearted man, and heartily rejoiced to see his patient so steadily mending. "But it will not do," thought he, "to let him recover with the aid of Nature alone; what would the faculty say?" Consequently he told Mrs. Lee "that, with careful attention, she might consider her husband out of danger. I will leave a little tonic medicine to build him up."

He then seated himself at the table and unfolded the hidden treasures of earth and sea: but somehow they had lost their charms: the doctor seemed fidgety, and fretted about something. Perhaps their fragrance was unpleasing to him; or perhaps the little monitor "behind the screen" had gently touched the keys of benevolence and conscientiousness; and the thought occurred to him, "Am I doing as I would be done by?" Be that as it may, the doctor actually turned himself half round in his chair to take another look at his patient. "Blast the stuff!" thought he.

"I won't give it to him. I'll see what Nature will do if let alone." And he hit upon this happy expedient. He took out a vial of lavender, shook it very deliberately, and carefully counted out three drops ; also one drop of tincture of rhubarb and a few grains of sugar. These he stirred very carefully into a tumbler of pure cold water, and gave his directions with a great deal of ceremony and exactness. "Take one teaspoonful once in two hours ; sponge the surface all over once a day in tepid or cold water, to suit the feelings of the patient. Above all, do not let him eat too much." Then, turning to Mr. Lee, he said, "You must be content to go hungry, sir, until you have taken up this medicine, which will, no doubt, set you on your feet again. It must be kept in a cool place. Be particular to follow all the directions. I will call again in a few days : meantime keep up good courage, all of you. Good day."

Mrs. Lee carefully followed the doctor's prescription, and had the pleasure of seeing her husband gaining very fast for one who had been so much reduced ; indeed, he seemed to have been entirely renovated and physically purified.

Here we see the superiority of Nature's simple remedies over all the powers of Art combined. By Nature's remedies, all the morbid secretions of the body are changed and brought into healthy and harmonious action ; even the craving appetite of the drunkard has been quenched by her purifying, cooling draughts ; but Nature cannot restore that which has absolutely been destroyed.

As the invalid gained strength he looked more and more deeply into his past life ; as he looked and reflected, his grief was pungent, his penitence deep and lasting ; and his self-accusations and lamentations over his fallen, degraded situation were distressing indeed.

"O, why have I lived ?" he said, one day. "I am not fit to live. Would to God I had died before I brought this mountain of guilt and degradation upon myself or this world of poverty and misery on my family ! O my wife ! why do you not curse me for all the wrongs I have done you ? That I could endure ; but your patient love and forbearance I cannot bear : it will kill me ; it will make me mad."

"Dear husband," said the weeping wife, "think not of me. It is enough that you are spared and see the error of your ways ; but O, remember that it is not against me only that you have sinned, but against your God."

Mr. Lee groaned aloud. His trembling yet rejoicing wife brought forth the Bible that dear old uncle Jim had given them on her bridal day. "Dear Edward," she said, "had we taken this holy word for our chart and compass when we started on the voyage of life, we should not have been tossed about by the angry billows of sin ; we might have sailed smoothly and joyfully on to the blessed haven of rest. Even now the voice of a crucified Redeemer is speaking through this blessed book — is inviting us to 'come unto him and cast our burdens on him.' My husband, let us go ; for are we not 'weary and heavy laden' ? Let us 'choose that better part, which shall not be taken

from us.' In my afflictions this book has been my refuge and my strong defence, my strength in every time of need. Come with me, my husband; 'taste and see that the Lord is good' and that 'his mercy endureth forever.'"

"Pray for me," said the husband, in tones of anguish.

"I have prayed for you by day and by night; and now, will you not let your voice ascend with mine to the mercy seat?"

The penitent sinner and the humble Christian bowed themselves at the foot of the cross. Their cry was not in vain; they had looked to the right source for help, and it will not be denied them.

Edward Lee will go forth into the field of life again, a noble wreck; although spiritually saved, his health and youthful vigor are gone, wasted by sin. His soul is like a garden where flowers of rarest hue might thrive, but in which an enemy with deadly hate had scattered with a liberal hand the seeds of bitter, noxious weeds. Each day, each hour, those seeds spring forth to life: nothing but patient toil, looking to God for strength, will root them out.

By the liberality of Captain Thompson and the kindness of father May, all the physical wants of the family had been provided for.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VISIT TO FARMER MAY'S.—PLEASANT AND AFFECTING MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO FAMILIES.—THE STRANGER'S INTEREST.

It was late in autumn when Mr. May came home one evening and indifferently handed a letter to his wife, who was quietly knitting by the stand. Uncle Jim was sitting in the great arm chair before the fire, with his head bowed upon his cane; and his hair, which was heavily frosted by the hand of Time, partly shaded his venerable face.

"Who is this from?" said Mrs. May. "I am sure I cannot guess: the handwriting looks some like Edward's, but not much."

"I should say 'not much,'" said the farmer, taking a second look. "No doubt it is about them; and, although I dread to hear, let us have it," said he, seating himself with a look of determined resignation.

Mrs. May read but a few lines before uncle Jim raised his head and brushed back his silvery locks, while an expression of surprise and happiness passed suddenly over his aged countenance. Her husband bowed his head upon his hands; and she, poor silly woman as she is, struggles

with her emotion and makes an effort to keep on. Thus she reads through her blinding tears, interspersed with an occasional sob and a fervent "God bless them." "I am coming home," said the letter, "to ask your pardon and your blessing." Here the mother's voice broke down entirely, and they all mingled their tears together.

For a few days there was a great stir at the farm house.

"'Bring forth the fatted calf,'" said the farmer, gayly; "for this is a day of great rejoicing, and worthy of some little sacrifice."

Poor Mrs. May, the neighbors said, was in a terrible flutter; now smiling, now weeping, now dusting the furniture for the seventh time, now stirring up a little "nice cake" such as Edward used to love, and wondering if he had got so he could eat any thing yet; and now calling on Bridget to do a dozen things at once, and, before she had time to begin, countermands the order, and thinks of something else that must be done first.

"Och! the poor crayther!" thought Bridget. "An sure it is stark crazy she'll be afther going afore long. God save her!"

It was an interesting sight to behold the meeting between the two families. There was much rejoicing; but there were also sorrow and regret; for two little forms that once were now are not. The happy group of years gone by has been rudely broken up by the relentless hand of Death. Jamie, the pet of the grandparents, and Johnny, the brighteyed cherub, had passed away. They missed them at their hearthstone; they missed them every

where. Yes ; their memories are fresh in the hearts of that household band. They are silent now ; but their thoughts are busy with the past.

At length uncle Jim slowly and solemnly repeated this beautiful and appropriate passage : " ' Now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' Yes, my children, I have been patiently waiting to behold this day ; and now I would fain go hence, to be here no more forever." And the aged man bowed his weary head reverently upon his withered hands.

All remained silent, as if struck with awe, for several moments ; when Mr. May suddenly exclaimed, " This will not do. We have more reason to rejoice than weep. Let us take a look at the bright side of life ; for there are better days ahead. I feel it ; yes, I know it."

The visit, although a pleasant one, was trying to Mr. Lee. He could not forget his poverty and degradation. Clouds and darkness are hanging over him ; but, with the eye of faith, he is enabled to look beyond them and discern a few golden rays of light, and a little strip of blue, cloudless sky.

A few days after his return home he was surprised by receiving a call from a stranger, the proprietor of his former shop, and more surprised when he made known his business.

" I hear," said the gentleman, " that in your profession you very much excel, and have called to engage you to oversee my work."

" I thank you," said Mr. Lee, " and should be glad to

engage with you ; but, you see," (and the poor man stammered and blushed painfully,) "I fear my health. The truth is, sir, my health and nerves have been badly shattered, and I am afraid I should not give you satisfaction immediately ; but, if you will give me some light work to do, I will ——" Here he was again overcome by his feelings, and could not proceed.

The stranger had been made acquainted with his history ; and his heart was melted with pity as he replied, in a lively tone, "But I insist on your trying the situation I first offered you. Your duties shall be light ; at any rate, I will not require more than you are able to perform. Your pay shall be liberal. Come, try it for three months ; and, if we are not both satisfied, we will talk about something else. I know into whose hands you have fallen, and take a deep interest in your welfare."

Mr. Lee still hesitated.

"My workmen are all from the city," said the stranger.

"Then I will gladly accept your offer," said Mr. Lee ; "for my greatest objection is removed. I could not bear to come in contact with the low companions of my fallen days or with those who had seen my degradation."

The two gentlemen shook hands at parting, feeling a deep interest in each other.

Peace and comfort have returned once more to the home of Edward Lee. The "star of Bethlehem" is shining in the distance ; the altar of prayer has been erected on his humble hearth. Henceforth his happiness must consist in looking upward and onward. Instead of planting new

and sweeter flowers in the garden of his soul, much precious time must be spent in rooting out the weeds and noxious plants sown in youth. But faint not, poor deluded one! Fight on; and God will give you a glorious victory over sin and moral death.

Two years have passed; and Edward Lee is still in the employment of the friend who so unexpectedly appeared to him, and his family enjoy more happiness than they ever thought it possible for them to experience. For a few weeks his strength has been failing; but he hides the fact from his beloved ones.

"Let them be happy while they can," he thought. "God only knows how much they have suffered, and are still doomed to suffer, on my account."

Nellie has been absent nearly a year and a half; and now a message of love has gone to call her home.

CHAPTER XXIV.

EXPERIENCE OF NELLIE IN THE FAMILY OF MAJOR DUNLAP.—
DINAH'S SYMPATHY.

Do you see that tall, elegant lady who moves so gracefully up and down in the mazy dance? What a beautiful complexion! How tastefully her dark hair is braided! With what consummate skill each braid is looped in the most becoming position! Is she not a lovely creature? What a winning smile she bestows now and then on her admiring partner! You would almost think her husband (for she has one) would feel a little jealous. O, no; for he, too, is a man of fashion, and at this very moment is handing a fair young girl very tenderly to her seat, bowing and smiling in a most bewitching manner.

Who are they, do you ask? As I shall have occasion to speak of them in another place, I shall withhold their names for the present. But observe well each feature and expression, and see if you can recognize them when you meet again. Come, now, and we will call at their magnificent home. We will not stop to examine and admire the splendor of the drawing rooms, but hie at once

to the nursery. There we shall find two sparkling gems, which will shine on forever, growing brighter and brighter, unless their brightness be dimmed by the corroding hand of Sin. Yes, two little immortal, never-dying souls are there : they have been placed in the care of their earthly parents. O, what a mighty trust !

But hark ! Is not that an infant's cry ? Let us enter. A young girl is walking rapidly up and down the room with an infant in her arms. She looks pale and tired ; yet she tries in every possible way to quiet the child — by turns caressing, then singing to him ; but all in vain. He could not be pacified.

" O, dear ! O, dear ! " said Nellie, (for she it was,) " what shall I do ? This is the third time I have been left in this way ; and the little thing has been crying every time when his mother came home. O, dear ! There ! there ! Hush ! hush ! baby darling."

Thus an hour passed on. The clock struck two ; but never once had the weary girl ceased her efforts to quiet the child who had been left in her care. Sometimes she would partially succeed, and the baby would be quiet for a few minutes ; then Nellie's face would grow calm and her voice clear. Anon the little fellow would scream again at the top of his voice. Two or three times she almost lost her patience ; not with the baby — O, no ; she felt nothing but pity for him ; but she thought the mother almost cruel to be so long absent from him.

Now a carriage stops at the door. Nellie gives an anxious look around the room — runs to the crib to see that all

is right in that direction. This done, the door opens, and the beautiful butterfly of the ball room comes flying in. She has on her ball-room dress; but her smiles, — they have disappeared. Indeed there is no trace left of them.

"Give me that child!" she almost screamed in intense anger. "This is the third time you have neglected it and let it cry itself almost to death. Poor little lamb! Why didn't you rock him and keep him asleep, you lazy girl? There! there! darling. Why haven't you fed him? I should like to know what you are good for if you cannot take care of the baby for an hour or two?"

"I tried to feed him several times," replied Nellie, "but he would not eat; and, if you do not believe me, you can try yourself and see if he will feed."

"I can, can I, impudence? You had better learn manners before you go to another place; for go you shall, before another night."

When Major Dunlap entered the room the injured wife and mother burst into hysterical sobs, stopping at intervals to make known her grievances and heap fresh abuse on Nellie, whose feelings were already greatly outraged.

"Never mind," said the indulgent husband; "you should not expect any thing else from a lazy, shiftless servant. Why didn't you call the cook, or somebody that knew something, if you didn't?" said he, looking hard at Nellie.

But she made no reply; she did not like to tell them

that the cook had refused to be troubled with the babe at night, saying she had enough to do in the daytime.

Poor Nellie retired to her room weary and sad. She could not sleep. She took her Bible, her mother's parting gift. As she opened it her eye rested on this encouraging passage : " Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." " To whom else can I go but unto thee, O my heavenly Father ? " she murmured, as she bowed her head in prayer. She arose comforted and refreshed.

Fortunately for her, both mother and child slept next morning until a very late hour, while Master Robert amused himself with pulling mamma's splendid wreath of artificial flowers in pieces. She was frightened, when she awoke from a short and troubled nap, to find the sun shining brightly in at her chamber window. She arose and went immediately to the kitchen ; for she had not undressed. She had been told she must leave that day, and was not sorry to do so ; but where should she go ? It was only two months since she left home : she longed to return again ; but that would not do. She had left with the intention of assisting her parents ; and she could not return to them empty handed ; she would try again. The thought occurred to her that Dinah, the cook, might assist her in some way. Now, Dinah, though her skin was black as ebony, and although she had refused to sit up nights and tend the baby, had a kind, warm heart biding in her bosom. She had assisted Nellie many times in her duties and sympathized with her in her troubles.

No sooner had she caught a glimpse of her good-natured face than she burst into tears. The honest-hearted cook was not much surprised, for she well knew that her mistress was not usually in very good humor after being out late at night. She spoke to Nellie in a cheerful voice. "Lor sakes, child! what's the sense of crying? Never mind. I've been here a year or more, and I hain't cried once yet, and sha'n't, nohow: there's no manner of use in it."

"But, Dinah, I'm to leave here to-day; and where to go I cannot tell." And she cried harder than ever.

Dinah held up her hands in astonishment. "What do you mean, child?" she said at length. "It is no longer ago than yesterday I heard mistress telling Mrs. Bartlett that you were worth your weight in gold and she wouldn't part with you for any thing. Mercy sakes, child! don't cry! She won't send you away nohow; trust me for that."

But Nellie had been told she should go; and she made up her mind to do so. Miss Dinah could not dissuade her from it. She washed and dressed the children and faithfully performed all her morning duties before Mrs. Dunlap arose. She hired Kitty, the chambermaid, to stay with baby; and, having learned that Mrs. Bartlett was inquiring for a chambermaid the day previous, she started in pursuit of her.

When she stood in that lady's presence she hardly knew how to introduce the subject or make known her errand; but she had resolved to tell the truth at all hazards. Her face was flushed and her mind confused; but she struggled

with her emotions and conquered, and made known her wish to engage in the capacity of chambermaid.

Mrs. Bartlett was not the most conscientious person in the world ; and, being very much in want of help, she did not choose to ask too many questions. She recollected having seen the girl at Mrs. Dunlap's, and had been pleased with her appearance. She remembered that Mrs. Dunlap had spoken very highly of her ; therefore she engaged her without hesitation.

Nellie promised to come that night or the next morning, and went home with a lighter heart. She waited until almost night, expecting every time her mistress approached her she would hand her her wages and bid her depart. But no ; not a word was said. As she was more pleasant than she had been for a long time, Nellie began to repent of her morning's engagement ; but she had made it, and it must be kept. Consequently she summoned courage and told her she had engaged to leave, and inquired when would be the most convenient time.

Mrs. Dunlap was surprised and angry when she learned the fact. "What kind of a lie did you tell Mrs. Bartlett, I should like to know, you ungrateful, good-for-nothing girl ?"

"I am not in the habit of telling lies," was the calm reply. "I did not have any occasion to give any reason for leaving my present place ; indeed, I do not think she knew where I came from : she made no inquiries whatever."

This assurance did much towards soothing the lady's irritated feelings. She concluded to pay her and let her go

immediately, remarking as she did so, "I presume you will find to your sorrow, miss, that I am not the hardest mistress in the world."

Nellie wrote to inform her parents of the change she had made and her reasons for doing so. "My duties are lighter here," she said; "I have more time to rest; so do not feel uneasy on my account. You ask me to spend Thanksgiving with you. Nothing that I can think of would give me greater joy, unless it is that I could stay always with my beloved parents, and dear, dear brother and sister; but I must not think of doing either at present. Were I to leave now for a day or two, I fear I should lose my place. Perhaps after the holidays are over I can spend a few days at home. Till then, believe me

"Your affectionate daughter,

"NELLIE."

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH THE READER IS INTRODUCED TO THE FAMILY OF MR. BARTLETT.—NELLIE'S ACQUAINTANCE WITH GEORGE EVELYN.—DR. DREW'S FRIENDSHIP AND EULOGY.

THE family of Mr. Bartlett consisted of himself, wife, and three daughters. The two eldest were candidates for marriage; consequently the house was usually filled with admiring, fortune-hunting beaux.

We will not follow Nellie through all her devious ways. Her situation, in some respects, was better than at Major Dunlap's; but she had her trials here. She was looked upon as an inferior of course; was often treated with indignity, and sometimes with contempt, especially by the fair Lucille, who seemed to take every opportunity to remind her that servants were not expected to cultivate the graces or imitate the dress and appearance of their superiors.

The truth was, the ladylike appearance of the chambermaid had often been the theme of conversation among the ladies and gentlemen in the drawing room, it being her duty to attend the door bell. One young gentleman especially had been particularly pleased with her appear-

ance, and made several inquiries concerning her, but could not gain much information, nor any that was satisfactory ; therefore he resolved to wait and watch for himself.

Poor Nellie was unconscious of the interest she was exciting in the bosom of a noble-hearted and wealthy orphan. George Evelyn reasoned with himself, or endeavored to, on the folly of falling in love with a person so far below him in station. It was of no use ; for every time he looked on the pale, delicate face of the unconscious girl he felt an increasing desire to learn her history. He was sure that, notwithstanding her apparent poverty, her mind was well cultivated.

Of late he saluted her with " Good morning, Miss Lee ; " and the salutation had been politely and respectfully returned. " O," thought the young man, " I wish Miss Lucille was half as easy and graceful in her appearance as this same Miss Lee, whom she affects to despise ! Her face, although sweet, wears a look of self-possession and dignity. I know that her soul must be elevated, whatever her outward condition may be."

Time passed on. George Evelyn was still constant in his attentions to Miss Lucille ; rumor called it an engagement. Nellie had learned to recognize the ring of Mr. Evelyn, and his almost daily visits were a source of secret joy to the lonely girl. His respectful and pleasant " Good morning " helped her to bear the insolent treatment she often received at the hands of others.

Was she, too, in love ? O, no ; she had never thought of love. She was pleased with his appearance, and could not

help admiring and respecting him; but she had not thought of loving him, or she would have blushed more deeply when he one morning handed her a choice bouquet of flowers. The innocent girl never dreamed they were for her. "Which of the young ladies shall I present them to?" she inquired.

"They are for yourself, Miss Lee, if you will accept them from one who, although almost a stranger to you, cannot help feeling a deep interest in your welfare."

His look of admiration as well as words could not be mistaken; and, although her own heart responded to his, she felt that it would be in vain. "He is laboring under a mistake," she thought; "he cannot know my true position in life." Thoughts of what she was, and what she might have been but for the "tempting bowl," came rushing through her mind. Who can blame her if in her sorrowing heart she vows eternal warfare against the deadly enemy that has dragged her down to poverty and degradation?

A circumstance occurred shortly after which helped to unfold more rapidly the affection which was springing up in the heart of the young man. A few evenings after Nellie received the precious bouquet, she was surprised, on opening the door, to see Dr. and Mrs. Drew standing before her. She had not much time for conjecture; for the doctor caught her hand, and, shaking it heartily, exclaimed, "Halloo, my young friend! you are just the person I wished to see; but I did not expect to find you here. How do you do? how do you do?"

"Come, come, doctor," said his wife, laughing; "don't wholly monopolize the young lady's attention: give me a chance to pay my respects."

They had brought her a letter, and promised to see her themselves should it be convenient; but they were not aware she was living at the house of an old friend.

Fortunately for her, her friend George Evelyn was there, and received an introduction to the good-natured doctor and his interesting wife. Now, it so happened that Nellie was esteemed very highly by Mrs. Drew, who had listened to many glowing descriptions from her eloquent husband of her gentleness, her disinterested love, her firmness and unflinching courage in the hour of dark adversity, and had learned to look upon her as the very personification of goodness and virtue.

The doctor and his wife both felt a desire to know whether their young friend was appreciated by her employers: accordingly they spoke of her the first opportunity that occurred. In the course of the evening the doctor remarked to Mr. Bartlett, "By the way, John, I met with a friend in your hall whom I was right glad to see, I assure you. I refer to Miss Lee. Do you know much about her?"

Mr. Bartlett replied, looking hard at his fashionable daughters, who were whispering in the opposite corner of the room, "I only know she is a modest, ladylike appearing girl, and wish there were more such."

Miss Lucille here whispered, loud enough to be heard by Mr. Evelyn, "Miss Lee seems to be a general favorite with the gentlemen. I expect papa will fall in love with her

next, she is so ladylike. I wonder what the doctor knows about her. Ask him, George : it will be sport to listen to her eventful history — a real romance, I dare say. I presume she is a runaway servant of his, or something of that sort," said she, as she tossed her head with ineffable scorn.

Mr. Evelyn did not have to ask. The doctor had only been waiting to gain the attention of the young lady ; for he saw at a glance that his favorite was not, neither was she likely to be, appreciated by her ; and he now spoke in a calm, distinct tone : " Yes, friend Bartlett, she is all that. She is modest and ladylike ; but she is more than that : she is a lady in the true sense of the word. She is a noble-minded, virtuous, self-sacrificing girl, worth a dozen of your fashionable, indolent ladies. I tell you what, John, I have seen her pass through trials and trying scenes that would make a harder heart than hers quake ; but she passed through them like a heroine ; and she is a heroine, worthy of a better fate and fortune than have befallen her."

" I always supposed she sprang from a very low family," said Lucille ; " and I infer from your account that she did."

" You are mistaken, Miss Bartlett," said the doctor, with some show of contempt : " she sprang from as good a family as you or I. Her mother is a fine specimen of a lady. The family have met with sad reverses, I admit ; but that does not destroy their birthright of respectability. Wife," said he, laughing, " I hope you will not be jealous of little Nell."

"O, no!" she replied, warmly. "You can hardly say too much or enough in her praise; she is one of a thousand."

Here the conversation was changed. There had been one listener who had drank in every word of praise with greedy eagerness and had treasured them up with parsimonious care. He was now silent and abstracted. "I was not mistaken, then," thought George Evelyn; "she is good and noble as well as dignified and lovely. She has seen reverses, too. How nobly she bears them!"

"Why, George! how grave and silent you have become all at once!" whispered Miss Lucille, laying her soft, white hand affectionately on his arm. "I hope Miss Lee's married admirer, by his pathetic and eloquent eulogies, has not carried away your heart captive and forced you to surrender at discretion."

"You know, Miss Bartlett, that my sympathies are very easily excited," he replied. "Did I not heartily sympathize with you when you lost your elegant fan at the picnic? Did I not search long for your bracelet, because you were so much distressed and afflicted at the loss of those very important articles? Miss Lee has been afflicted in a little different way, to be sure; but I know of no good reason why we should either of us withhold our sympathy; do you?" he inquired, in rather a sarcastic tone.

The young lady could think of no good reason; but she said she thought it "more proper and natural for people to bestow their sympathies upon those of their own standing in society."

"What am I to understand you to mean by standing in society? Do you measure people by their mental and moral worth, or by their dollars and cents? Alas! the latter is too much the case at the present day. My father," he continued, "was an honest tradesman. He commenced the world without a farthing; but by industry and economy he amassed a fortune. He was born a poor man, and by his firmness and integrity overcame the obstacles in his pathway, and gained not only wealth, but honors and distinction. I was born and nurtured in the lap of luxury and indulgence; and men — yes, women, too — honor me on account of my father's hard-earned gold and well-deserved honors. I count it an honor that I am the son of such a father. Alas that my soul has not grown strong nor my intellect expanded by struggling with poverty and conquering the miserable prejudices of a mistaken world!"

"Why, really, Mr. Evelyn, you are quite plebeian in your opinion; I was not aware of it before. I am almost afraid you have lost your heart and gone crazy for the sake of our genteel little chambermaid." And Miss Lucille laughed heartily at her own wit.

A few days after Mr. Evelyn placed a note in the hand of Nellie. She had resolved again and again never to accept any thing more from him; but she was unable to resist. With a confused feeling of joy and sadness, of pain and pleasure, she hurried to her room and read as follows: —

MISS LEE: I am an orphan, alone in the world, and

•

lately, although surrounded by many admiring, so called friends. I have sought in vain among them for fellowship and disinterested sympathy, and have turned away sick at heart from the hollow-hearted crowd. Their property has made them selfish ; their selfishness has made them mean ; their meanness has made them contemptible. I say this to you, because I am aware that you have been treated with contempt by those every way your inferiors ; but I would not indulge in a spirit of bitterness. We should pity their folly and endeavor not to despise them in our hearts. We but lower ourselves when we stoop to hatred ; and you, at least, are incapable of hatred and revenge. I thank you, dear Nellie, (allow me to call you so,) for the great though silent lesson you have taught me, that, whatever our situation in life or whatever abuse we may receive at the hands of others, we should always maintain equanimity of temper and perfect self-respect.

Are you, too, alone in the world, dear Nellie ? and has it dealt harshly with you ? I fear it has. I know but little of your history ; but, if you will accept of my unworthy friendship, it is most sincerely yours. Will you accept it, and, in return, bestow on me your confidence and sympathy ? Will you be to me a sister, Nellie, and allow me a brother's rights ? I have wealth enough for both. Do not fear to trust me ; for, if you have a mother or a judicious female friend, I would have you place yourself at once in her care. Do not think you would place yourself under obligations to me ; for I shall feel more than compensated for whatever favors I may be able to bestow on you by

your affection and sympathy. Write to me, Nellie, when and where I can have an interview with you, that I may receive from your own lips the boon I ask — your friendship and a sister's love.

Your sincere friend,

GEORGE EVELYN.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NELLIE'S INGENUOUS LETTER. — HER INVITATION AND ATTENDANCE
AT THE CONCERT. — HER MOTHER'S LETTER. — THE INDIGNATION
OF THE BARTLETTS.

WHO that has not been placed in the situation of our heroine, possessing the same susceptibilities and ardent affections, can understand the conflicting emotions that oppressed and almost overwhelmed the sensitive girl? Her predilections were all in favor of Mr. Evelyn; that he was sincere and honest she could not doubt; but would not his feelings change when he became acquainted with her history? She thought they must; and her heart sank within her. But she knew from whence she had derived strength and support in her former trials; and she prayed earnestly that she might be led in the path of virtue and rectitude.

She longed to consult her mother; but refrained, lest she should be anxious about her. "I will bury this secret deep in the sanctuary of my own bosom," she thought. "I will write and tell him all; and, if he still wishes my friendship, I shall not object."

Think you not this was a hard trial for her — to lay open for inspection the faults, follies, and weaknesses of her now beloved father ? Do you say he had reformed, and there was no need of subjecting herself to so much humiliation ? Others would tell him if she did not ; and she nobly wished him to understand precisely her position before he pledged himself in any way. She was right ; but it required an amount of moral courage to place obstacles that she deemed insurmountable in the way of her own happiness and welfare that but few possess.

George Evelyn did not remain long in suspense. He read with deep and thrilling interest the narrative of her prosperity and subsequent adversity. The conclusion of her letter was as follows :—

“ And now, dear sir, I leave it for you to decide whether my friendship is worth claiming or not. If you think it is, and still wish my confidence, I shall be most happy to receive a call from you whenever you are willing that the family with whom I reside should know of our acquaintance. Believe me, sir, when I say that I do not consider you bound in the least by any acknowledgment of proffered friendship you have made to me, knowing, as I do, that you are wholly unacquainted with my past history ; and believe me, also, that I shall ever remain

“ Yours respectfully,

“ NELLIE.”

We will not pretend to say that the perusal of Miss Lee's

letter did not cause the young man a good deal of pain. He felt a deep sympathy for the young girl; but he had imbibed strong prejudices against that class of persons to which she belonged. Had her father lost his property in any other way he would not have hesitated a moment; but when he thought of the patient, uncomplaining girl, her past sufferings and present hardships, he blushed to think of the injustice he was doing her by allowing his prejudices to control his feelings. "Is she to blame?" he asked himself. His heart answered, "No."

He read the letter over and over again: each time he perused it, the truth, nobleness, and candor of Nellie shone forth more and more conspicuously. "Surely," thought he, "she has stronger and higher claims on my love and respect than she could have had had she lived under more advantageous circumstances. She shows in her life and character an innate greatness of soul, which must and shall command my highest esteem. I will be to her a friend; and, if I find her what I think she is, I will conquer this hateful prejudice and lay my best affections and my fortune at her feet."

He was not, however, quite prepared for the condition upon which she had offered him an interview. He had not thought of making their acquaintance public at present. He could not help acknowledging the justice and propriety of her decision; but how to bring about the result was a difficult question. He had thought of calling upon her when the family were absent; but Nellie would not consent; and although he could not blame her under

the circumstances, yet he felt a little perplexed. He could see no way to bring about that which was becoming to him a very much-to-be-desired interview, until one day his eye caught the notice of a great concert that was to be that evening. "That's it!" he thought. "I'll call and invite her to attend."

"I shall be happy to do so," she replied, in answer to his request that she would accompany him.

Nellie had particular reasons for wishing to see Mr. Evelyn; for that very day she had received a message from her mother, calling her to her quiet home. As her heart was somewhat enlisted in his favor, it is not surprising that she wished to inform him of her intentions.

Mr. Evelyn called at the appointed hour. On their way he had so much to say that his companion had no opportunity to make known her plans. She admired the sentiments which fell in such eloquent strains from his lips. There was so much warmth and earnestness in his manner of expressing himself that she felt it would be unjust to doubt his sincerity. His conversation was of such a nature that she was obliged to engage in it, although she would have much preferred listening.

The concert was excellent. No one could appreciate good music better than Nellie: she was delighted, enraptured. Mr. Evelyn listened with pleasure to the appropriate encomiums she bestowed from time to time. She had never looked half so interesting to him before; every feature was lighted with enthusiastic admiration.

They walked home almost in silence. Both were

busy with their own thoughts. When they had nearly reached the house Mr. Evelyn inquired of Nellie how she had enjoyed herself.

She replied, with her accustomed candor, "Very much. I do not remember to have spent a more delightful evening."

"Thank you, Nellie, (I believe you gave me permission to call you ; did you not ?")

"I prefer you would," she replied ; "it sounds more friendly."

"Then I am to understand that you not only accept my friendship, but that it gives you pleasure to do so ? Let me thank you again for the confidence you have been pleased to bestow upon me. I trust that both will be mutually benefited. But, Nellie, in your present situation it will be impossible for us to meet often ; it will subject you to new annoyances and will be unpleasant for me. Would not your mother like to have you at home again ?"

Having now reached the door, Nellie handed him her mother's letter, saying, "That will answer your question better than I can," and entered the house.

She was going immediately to her room, and had nearly reached it, when she heard the voice of Miss Mary Bartlett calling, "Nell ! Nell ! Is that you ?"

Nellie answered in the affirmative.

"Come here, then ; mother wants to speak to you."

Nellie returned to the parlor with a palpitating heart. Miss Lucille was reclining on an elegant lounge, with a costly vinaigrette in one hand, and an embroidered

handkerchief, pressed convulsively to her eyes, in the other.

"Who was that gentleman with you this evening, Miss Lee?" inquired Mrs. Bartlett in a cold, sarcastic tone.

Nellie was a little confused at the question of Mrs. Bartlett and the general appearance of things. She remained silent a moment.

"Then you do not choose to answer me, do you, miss? Very well; to-morrow I will talk with you again," giving her head at the same time a very significant toss.

Nellie had now regained her composure, and calmly and respectfully replied, "I have no objections to answering your question. I was surprised that you did not know the gentleman, if you saw him; for he is a constant visitor at your house."

Miss Lucille arose rather suddenly, dropping her vinaigrette; and such an expression of anger shone forth from her tearstained eyes that Nellie would have fled in terror from such a formidable foe had not her mother's letter and the pleasant evening she had passed made her soul strong. She did not flinch; but, turning towards Mrs. Bartlett, she continued: "Mr. George Evelyn was my escort this evening—a gentleman of such known respectability that certainly I need not be ashamed of my company." And, bowing gracefully to the ladies, she hastily left the room; not, however, until Miss Lucille had shouted, "There! I told you so, mother!" and burst into tears again.

"Unheard-of impudence!" said Mrs. Bartlett, seating herself on the lounge beside her daughter.

"Ridiculous piece of nonsense!" said Miss Mary. "I always told Lucille he did not care a fig for her; and now I hope she believes it."

"No, indeed, I don't!" replied the indignant girl, sobbing. "I know better; but that mean upstart has a fine chance to make herself interesting. I dare say he took her out of pity."

"I should like to know what you are making such a fuss about, then," replied her sister, tartly.

The truth was, Mr. Evelyn's attentions to Lucille consisted wholly in his numerous calls and visits. He came often by particular invitation, and the young lady appropriated his company as much as possible to herself, not because their feelings harmonized so perfectly, for there were other young men of her acquaintance whose sentiments were more in unison with her own, "but because he was handsome, and his fortune magnificent, worth having," she used to tell her sister when she teased her about the pains she was taking to secure him. Mr. Evelyn was aware that her affections were placed on his gold; and he therefore felt no conscientious scruples about visiting her, especially while there was such an attraction in the house.

"Hush! hush!" said the mother. "I have been thinking that he wishes to tease you, Lucille, for joking so much about the girl. Have you offended him in any way, my love?"

"No, mother," responded the weeping girl; "unless,"

she said, brightening a little. "You know what I said when old Dr. Drew and his wife were extolling her to the skies?"

"No, not exactly, my dear. Did he seem offended?"

"He gave me a long lecture about false notions and aristocratic feelings, &c ; but I did not suppose he was really offended." Lucille's tears flowed afresh ; she felt mortified and vexed to think that any one should prefer the company of a servant girl to her own ; and that George Evelyn should, was a drop too much in her cup of disappointed hopes.

"Don't cry any more, my daughter ! I presume it will all come out exactly right : there is some misunderstanding about it, you may be assured. It may be that the doctor's story excited his pity, and perhaps he thought he would punish you a little for your past coquetry. You must be careful not to let him know that the affair has caused you a moment's doubt or a pang of jealousy. Of course he cannot have any intention of paying his addresses to a servant girl."

"Such things have happened," said Miss Mary, maliciously, "and I presume will happen again."

"Mr. Evelyn would feel himself insulted," continued the mother, "were I to believe for a moment that he could stoop to so mean an alliance. So cheer up, my love ; we will not give her a chance to practise her arts on the gentleman any longer. Maggie shall tend the door for the present ; and, as soon as I can procure another girl, I will

send her away. If he should inquire for her, (but of course he will not,) we will tell him she has left, sick."

It was a late hour when the family retired. Lucille did not feel quite so confident of the happy termination of the affair as her mother ; but she wisely concluded to profit by her suggestion and appear as if nothing had occurred.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PERUSAL OF MRS. LEE'S LETTER.—NELLIE'S INTENTION MADE KNOWN TO MR. EVELYN.—HIS DISAPPOINTMENT AT NOT MEETING HER AGAIN.

MR. EVELYN read and reread the letter that Nellie had given him with much pleasure. He was satisfied that the writer was not only a pureminded woman, but that her mind was well cultivated, and also that Nellie had been a dutiful, affectionate child.

The letter ran as follows:—

MY BELOVED DAUGHTER: I need not tell you how lonely I have been at times since you left me, or how much I have missed my little staff for support, my comforter in the hour of trial, my sweet sympathizer and participator in all my joys, and soother of all my sorrow. My heart, at times, has been oppressed with anxious solicitude when I have thought of you away from your home, unloved and unappreciated by those around you, nobly and without a murmur toiling on, forgetful of self, bearing the insults of those by nature much

less worthy than yourself. Then, my sweet child, one thought alone has sustained me. God rules ; "and all things shall work together for good to them that love him and keep his commandments."

Daily have I invoked his blessing and protection for my absent one. I have prayed and longed for the happy hour when I could say, "Come home!" And now the longed-for day has come. O, what a delightful privilege to call you home! Is it not a welcome message, my daughter? I know it is. Your beloved father bids you come; he can no longer spare his eldest born, his dearest child. Then hasten to us, my daughter; we wait for you. I shall not be wholly blessed until I fold you to my heart again. Come to us without delay.

From your loving mother,

ALICE LEE.

Mr. Evelyn was rather surprised when he called, a day or two after the concert, to meet a stranger at the door. He inquired for Miss Lee; but the servant had received instructions to tell him she had left that morning, sick, and had gone she knew not where. He walked in, however, hoping to gain some clew to the mystery, and was received with unusual cordiality by the whole family. They pressed him to dine with them the following day: they were expecting company, and could not, and would not, be refused.

He promised to be there, thinking he might get a glimpse of Nellie; for that she was then in the house he did not

doubt. She had written with a pencil on the margin of her mother's letter, "I shall leave here Saturday morning. Should we never meet again, my newly-found, much-esteemed friend, be assured that you have my grateful thanks for your proffered friendship and assistance. May the thought that your kind words and looks have often sent a beam of sunshine across the darkened ray of one who was struggling with adversity be to you a source of happiness. That God may bless you is the sincere desire of

"NELLIE."

George Evelyn perused those words again before retiring that night. He found, upon looking deeply into his heart, that the sentiments and affections there springing into existence were something more than friendship or brotherly love. He acknowledged to himself that a sister's love from Nellie would not satisfy the newly-awakened affections of his heart.

He was disappointed when he returned home next evening ; for he had neither seen nor heard from her who occupied his thoughts. He resolved that he would see her if their lives were spared ; he would write and ask permission of her parents to visit her.

The Bartletts felt more anxious than ever since Nellie had made known her intention of leaving them, simply informing her mistress that her mother had sent for her. They did not believe it. Nellie blushed deeply when Mrs. Bartlett expressed her disbelief and requested her to show the letter.

"It can make no difference to you, madam, whether she has or has not written ; since I prefer to go, I shall do so."

"Just as well," replied the haughty woman. "I was intending to send you away when I could get other help."

"I am glad my leaving does not disappoint," was the mild reply.

"What does this mean?" said Miss Lucille when she was left alone with her mother. "If it was any body but George, I should think he was the cause of it."

"Do you really think it was he you saw with her?" inquired the doting mother.

"Yes ; I am sure of it ; I cannot be mistaken."

"Well, I do not know what to make of it, it is so mysterious. It is astonishing what power such girls have over men of birth and station. He will soon be tired of her, that is certain : meantime you must use your utmost endeavors to win the prize."

"But, mamma, don't you think it looks a little suspicious, her leaving just now?"

"Indeed I do, my dear ; it is passing strange ; but I think it will all be cleared up one of these days : so keep up good courage."

Thus incited by the designing mother, the hopeful daughter labored on, not doubting her final success.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NELLIE'S RETURN HOME.—HER SECRET DISCLOSED.—THE APPROBATION OF HER PARENTS.

THERE was great rejoicing at Mr. Lee's ; for Nellie, the beloved daughter and sister, had returned, and much improved in outward appearance at least ; but Susie thought she was the same darling sister.

Freddie felt proud enough when he led her into church the next day. She received many pleasant recognitions from her old friends ; and some who had formerly treated her with coldness and neglect seemed anxious to renew her acquaintance.

How true it is, when surrounded by our loved ones, that we cannot see the gradual and silent progress of insidious disease ! It is only when Death comes marching in with bold and rapid strides that we see and are prepared for its approach ; but, when we are absent from the beloved one for a little season, then how quickly we mark the change !

Thus it was with Nellie. She saw that her father had grown weak and feeble, and she felt a fearful foreboding

of coming ill. She made no remarks ; she could not bear to think of losing him ; and to speak of it would be extremely painful.

Days passed by, when she began to hope she was deceived. She had many interesting circumstances and incidents to relate to the family ; but of George Evelyn and her acquaintance with him she had not spoken, although her thoughts had often dwelt upon him. A tear now and then fell upon her pillow as she thought how improbable it was that they should ever meet again. There was a vast difference in their situations in life ; and she could not expect from their short acquaintance that he would seek her in her distant home. Could she have seen him before she left it would have been a great satisfaction to her ; but had he not braved much in taking her to a public concert ? He certainly had. What account would the Bartletts give him concerning her, should he make any inquiries ? She could hope for nothing favorable from them, and blamed herself for allowing her feelings to become so much interested in a stranger, when it was pity alone that prompted him to the course that he pursued. She rejoiced that she had given him her mother's letter ; for now, should he wish to see her, he could easily do so, for he had her address. She did not expect him ; but she would have been sadly disappointed if she had heard nothing from him.

She was not, however, doomed to disappointment ; for she had not been at home a week before her father handed her a letter. Both parents were surprised to see her blush

deeply and retire hastily to her own room. This was so unlike their Nellie that they looked at each other in amazement.

"Never fear," said the mother; "we shall know all; she will have no secrets with us."

She was not mistaken. After an hour's absence Nellie returned, looking very happy, though her countenance was somewhat flushed. Seating herself on a low stool at her mother's feet, she said, "I have something to tell you, my father and mother. Will you hear it now?"

"Whenever you wish," was the reply.

"Let it be now," she said; "for I cannot bear to keep a secret from you."

At first the father's brow grew stern as he listened to her story, but at the conclusion it wore a milder aspect; and, when she ended by placing in his hand the letter, he was prepared to receive a favorable impression. When he had finished reading he reflected a few moments, and then remarked, as if thinking aloud, "I like the sentiments of that letter; and then, too, his wishing her to come home is good evidence that his intentions are honorable. At any rate, my child, I will grant his request, if your mother has no objections; for I have a little faith in your judgment," said he, smiling; "and besides, what I have heard of your friend makes me anxious to see him. One visit to your humble home may cure him of his sudden friendship," he remarked, as he looked sadly round on the apartment.

How bitter must have been the reflections of Mr. Lee



"I like the sentiments of that letter." p. 190.



as he surveyed his young and interesting family, plunged into poverty and humiliation by his own vicious course—subjected to hardships and mortifications from which it should have been his duty as well as privilege to shield them! But the past can never, never be recalled. What a solemn fact! It is one which should cause all seekers after pleasure to pause and sincerely ask themselves this question, when about to engage in any doubtful transaction, Will the recollection of this event be a source of satisfaction and delight? or will it fill my heart with sorrow and remorse? Can I expect the blessing of Almighty God? or will he frown upon me? These reflections will have a tendency to deter them from sinful indulgences and save them from much future sorrow.

O, what a sweet, calm, holy joy diffuses itself through the human soul when in the hour of solitude and reflection it unfolds the closely-written page of Memory and there reads the record of duties well performed; of obligations and responsibilities faithfully met; of sacrifices made for friends; of enemies forgiven and served; of sad, desponding hearts made glad! Yes, blessed, thrice blessed is he whose soul is rich in memories such as these. In the hour of death, how calmly sweet the peace that flows so gently through the soul, where “God has been the Lord; for he knows that his Redeemer liveth, and his mercy endureth forever”! Let both old and young remember that the “way of the transgressor is hard” and leads to certain destruction.

Mr. Lee had remained silent for a long time, when his wife inquired, “Of what are you thinking, father?”

"Of the past," he replied, "the present, and the future. When thinking of the past, my soul is like the troubled sea, that knows no rest; when of the present, my heart is filled with gratitude and love; but when away to an eternal state, I am filled with wonder and amazement at the length, breadth, and depth of a Savior's pardoning love. O, what a glorious redemption is this that I trust has been wrought in my own sinful nature!

"And I now believe another fond wish and earnest prayer of my heart is about to be signally answered, and that God is raising up a friend and protector for my family when this weary body shall go hence to be no more. I feel that this event will take place ere many months; but we must not anticipate sorrow; 'for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' " he remarked, in a more cheerful tone. "Let us offer up our evening sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," noticing his words had cast a gloomy shadow on the little household band, "and retire; for it is getting late."

Early next morning Nellie walked to the village post office and deposited there her precious burden — the first love letter she had written, although she had written many loving ones. She did not feel quite satisfied with what she had written; but who ever did on such an occasion? It is a difficult task to say just enough and not a word too much; and Nellie found it so. She had, however, finally succeeded in writing something rather satisfactory; and, with a heart full of confidence and expectation, she sent the little missive forth on its weighty errand.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. EVELYN'S VISIT AND KIND OFFER.—THE RAPID DECLINE OF
MR. LEE.—HIS DEATH.—THE WIDOW'S RETURN TO HER EARLY
HOME.

"A CITY beau, sure enough," thought many a grayhaired dame and brighteyed maiden as Nellie Lee and George Evelyn quietly seated themselves in church one Sabbath day; "a city beau, as handsome as a picture; and rich, too, I presume. At all events, he looks like a gentleman."

"How funny!" said some. "How very strange!" said others. But all united in saying it was fortunate for the family; that is, if he did not vanish like many other desirable blessings. As usual in such cases, some were glad, others envious; but the majority agreed that Nellie was a good girl and deserved prosperity.

And Nellie,—what a world of joyful anticipations and dreams of future happiness now burst upon her view! She was grateful as well as joyful. Mr. Evelyn, too, was happy. Since his nearest and dearest friends had ceased to cheer and bless him, his heart had felt a constant crav-

ing for sympathy and true friendship — for a heart which he could rely upon through all the changing scenes of life. There was a vacant place in his soul. It is no longer there. He has found the jewel he has so long sought ; and, although he found it not in diadem or coronet, he resolved to wear it in his bosom. Nor did he prize his gem the less because it had never glistened in the courtly halls of kings or sparkled in the miser's grasp. His gem was none the less a gem because he found it in the humble walks of life. O, no. It had passed through the furnace of affliction unscathed, and he prized it all the more ; for now he knew it was a diamond whose purity and brightness could not be dimmed.

Nellie sometimes expressed the wish that she had something besides her heart's first pure affection to bestow ; but she was satisfied with the assurance that she was none the less dear on account of poverty and obscurity. " I know, dear Nell," he used frequently to say, " that I am far more happy in knowing that I have it in my power to increase your happiness and remove some of the thorns from your pathway than I could possibly be had I found you in a different sphere."

Days and weeks passed rapidly by, and nothing occurred to disturb the peaceful joy of Nellie's heart. Her step is light and her smile joyous. Even the voice and step of Mrs. Lee have changed. Letters were often exchanged between the young lovers ; both were mutually pleased and gratified by this interchange of thought ; and, though let-

ters of this description are not often public property, we will here quote a few lines from one that she received a short time previous to her father's death : —

"MY BELOVED : I had hoped before another Sabbath day to meet you in your quiet home ; and my heart rebels against the stern decree of fortune that calls me elsewhere." The letter then went on to state the particulars of the case, and continued : "I know that my Nellie will believe me when I say that I would not leave without seeing her, were not my personal attention absolutely necessary in another direction without delay. I hope not to be long absent, my sweet, sweet friend ; for I am lonely when I am away from you.

"When I last saw you, you expressed a desire to commence your music lessons again. I was gratified to hear you ; for it will give me pleasure to enable you to do so. Since, by your parents' wish, a long, long year must pass before I can call you all my own, will you not please me by spending that year at school ? Think of it, and consult your parents, Nellie ; and when we meet again we will mature the plan, provided that you all coincide with me.

"Till then I remain your sincere friend,

"GEORGE."

Nellie made known her lover's wish, and readily gained the consent of her parents. They were sorry to part with her ; but they felt that the request was just and natural, and raised no objections.

But one more trial awaits her before her life shall become calm and peaceful as a placid lake. With her father she will not part until his ransomed spirit shall have crossed the Jordan of death ; for it is now evident that he is passing away.

"I have nothing more to wish or ask for in this world," thought Mrs. Lee.

The present was joyous, and she had nothing to do with the past. Her husband was so kind and tender towards her that at times she almost forgot that he had not always been so.

The remark is often made that the "ways of Providence are mysterious." It is true ; but it is equally true that, "as we sow, so shall we reap." We cannot violate the laws of life and set at nought all the physiological conditions of health and not suffer the terrible penalty, however sincere our repentance. The organic structure of man is such that he is capable of making great resistance ; and Nature is not only the best-physician, but her capabilities and resources are extensive and wonderful. But there is a limit beyond which the command is imperative : "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

We cannot plunge ourselves into a boiling caldron and expect to escape the result ; we cannot sever a limb and expect Nature to restore it again ; neither, when we have destroyed the action of the vital organs by the use of alcohol or poison of any kind, can we expect to live out our appointed time. This would not be in accordance with reason or revelation.

It was said that Mr. Lee seemed to be thoroughly renovated. This was true ; but the fund of vitality which might have lasted him through fourscore years and ten had been sadly squandered, thereby shortening the number of his years. The vital machinery had been corroded ; and now the wheels of life moved feebly on. Had he understood the mechanism, so delicate and intricate, of his wonderful structure, or had he been familiar with the laws of hygiene, he might have lengthened out his days, and thus afforded much comfort and happiness to his family ; but, alas ! it was not so.

He is sinking rapidly, not with any apparent disease, but a gradual wasting of all the powers of life. He complains of nothing but weakness and fatigue. " Must this be so ? " you ask. " Must the treasure so recently found so soon be snatched away ? Must they who have suffered so long and patiently be plunged again into the cruel vortex of deep affliction ? " O Death ! take back thy hand. Put up thine arrows for a season, or turn thou to some other mark. Turn to some homeless, childless wretch, whose life is but a pestilence on earth.

Dost thou scorn so mean a prize ? Then turn to yon happy home, where not a cloud has fallen yet, — where every cup is running over with bliss, and still they know it not, — and take but *one* drop from out their brimming cup, to show them that this is not their home ; take but *one* gem from their bright earthly diadem and bear it to the skies, that they may turn their eyes from earth to heaven.

Our prayer is vain. The mandate has gone forth ; and

Edward Lee is struggling in the arms of Death. O, this, to us shortsighted mortals, is a cruel stroke. But let us listen to the words of the dying man.

"Come nearer," he whispers softly, "dear, patient wife, and you, my beloved children. My earthly sight grows dim; but my faith grows strong. O, how infinite and matchless is the love and mercy of God! how wonderful and glorious is the redemption of the cross! My wife, my children, my sins have been great; but God, I trust, has forgiven them. Can you?"

Again and again, in broken sentences, the sweet assurance was given.

"It was hard," he continued, "to think of leaving you to struggle with poverty and disgrace; but my heavenly Father has made it easy. I can leave you in his hands. Fear not; he will protect. Trust in him."

Calling his son to his bedside, he laid his hand upon his head and offered up a short but fervent prayer that his ardent, impetuous soul might be saved from the fatal snares into which he had blindly rushed.

"Kiss me once more, dear wife. You have been true and faithful; but O, how have I failed in my duties and obligations to you! You, by the blessing of God, have saved me from a drunkard's grave and led me even to the gate of heaven. Thine was an angel's task; and thou shalt have an angel's reward."

Could mortal lips have uttered a greater eulogy? Poor weeping wife! if your heart grows faint and weary, look up and think of your great reward.

Weaker and weaker grows the dying man. "Nellie, Freddie, Susie, — God bless you all! Love and obey your mother; and we shall meet, a happy family, in the spirit world. Dear wife, farewell! Farewell, kind friends!" Once more he whispered, "Meet me in heaven." Silently the gates of his earthly tabernacle flew open; and his purified spirit went forth, freed from its earthly garments.

Our hearts melt with pity when we think of the bereavement which has again fallen on this thrice-afflicted family. They feel their loss keenly and mourn with deep sincerity. The wanderer had returned, and they were looking forward with joyful anticipations of future happiness; but now they can exclaim, in the language of the inspired penman, "My purposes are all broken off." Yet they mourn not as those without hope; they can look forward to a blissful reunion in heaven.

We will not attempt to describe the feelings of the stricken family. Those who have seen the black pall of death falling heavily upon their hearts and homes, almost excluding the rays of the noonday sun, — *they* may form a faint conception of the pangs that pierced their bleeding hearts. It is only when the steel is plunged into our own bosoms that we can know the full extent of the mortal wound.

The funeral services were appropriate and affecting, and tears of sympathy fell from many eyes. The aged pastor stopped midway in his earnest prayer to drive back the tide of sorrowful memories; for he had known the departed long and intimately. The coffin lid is raised.

Let the young man pause before it while the noble form and manly brow which lie in ruins before him speak in solemn tones of warning.

Bring forth the wretch who helped to effect this ruin and bid him gaze upon his work. Bring forth the hideous monster, the poison snake, whose venomous lips have sucked the lifeblood from that widowed heart and early blanched the cheek of innocence ; bid him quail before that mourning group ; for all the tears and groans wrung out by him are garnered up, and soon—too soon for him—they will fall upon his guilty head in “terrible rain.” He has started on his downward course. A swift destruction will soon overtake him.

What says the lonely widow ? “‘ Although He slay me, yet will I trust in him ; for I know in whom I have believed.’ My children, we have much to comfort us in this our deep affliction. Your beloved father has gone to the spirit world. He sleeps not in a loathsome, drunkard’s grave. He left us with a sweet assurance in our hearts that he has gone to rest. He left us with his blessing, with words of faith, and hope, and perfect peace upon his lips. We shall meet him there in that blissful paradise ; and let us not repine.”

Mrs. Lee was not left entirely destitute of the means of support. Her husband had carefully laid by all that could be spared ; and good old uncle Jim two years ago had fallen peacefully asleep and left her a few hundred dollars, which, with Freddie’s assistance, might have enabled her to remain comfortably in her own home.

Her parents, however, would not consent. "Come home," was their united voice: "we are lonely: you will be lonely: come to your childhood's home: there is room for you and yours."

They went, with the exception of Nellie, who was being educated by a friend away from home.

In the remainder of this story we think it will be proved that uncompromising virtue and integrity are often signally rewarded, while vice, dishonesty, and fraud are as often signally punished.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE GREAT SECRET OF GAINING RECONCILIATION UNDER HEAVY TRIALS DISCOVERED BY MRS. LEE.

FOR some time after Mrs. Lee returned to her father's house her health seemed to be in a very precarious state ; but the kindness of her parents had soothed her wounded, bleeding heart, and she had now regained something of her former faith and trust in God. .

It was fortunate for her that her mother was taken sick a few months after she had taken up her abode at home ; for the physical exertion she was permitted to make was a blessing and benefit to her. Her friends, and especially her mother, were possessed with the mistaken notion that she had passed through so many trials and hardships that now every wish must be anticipated and every want gratified without the least care on her part ; and she, at first, was as passive as an infant in its mother's arms. There was, indeed, no pecuniary necessity for Mrs. Lee's exerting herself ; but there was an imperative demand for both mental and physical action.

When the soul has been crushed and wounded, when

the great picture gallery of the heart has been filled by the ever busy hand of Memory with pictures of departed joys and blasted hopes, of loved ones moaning with convulsed, with more than mortal agony,—and then the coffin and the pall, each hope, each fear, each sigh, all, all are painted there,—then it is that the soul must turn resolutely away from itself until the hand of faith and resignation has had time to bring forth the bright, the glowing, the Savior's living pictures, which have been for a season buried beneath the thick, black pall of Sorrow and her dismal train. Yes; the soul is indeed an immense gallery of paintings, where all the lights and shades of life are placed with the nicest care and precision.

It was said that Mrs. May's sickness proved a blessing to her daughter. It diverted her mind from her own afflictions and gave a new impulse to her being; and when after a few weeks she became convalescent, she was surprised to observe the improvement in her daughter's appearance.

Mrs. Lee herself was now convinced that nothing but active, useful employment could enable her to live a calm and peaceful life: therefore, with the approbation of her parents, she opened a school for the young children in her neighborhood, where she passed several hours daily.

Little by little she began to remove the dark and gloomy curtain from before the heart pictures of her departed ones. Faith in God and his promises and resignation to his will are slowly doing their allotted work; and the

shadowy veil that had hid the glorious beauty of earth since the spirit of her husband had passed away is slowly dissolving before the beautiful light and the transcendent loveliness of the glimpses that her soul has caught from the inner courts of the spirit world.

They tell us that the spirits of our departed are links that bind our souls to heaven. Then who can tell how many links it would take to form a chain — a bright, electric chain — by which the mourning and the ransomed ones may hold communion here? O cheering thought! Then we could feel the presence of our sainted ones and catch the fading echoes of their golden harps. O blessed certainty! For how else can the soul that has been bereaved, bowed down by sorrow, expand and rejoice again?

CHAPTER XXXI.

CAPTAIN THOMPSON'S RETURN.—THE MEETING BETWEEN THE FRIENDS.

MR. LEE has now been dead between nine and ten months. Nellie is yet at school ; Fred is studying with Dr. Drew ; and little Sue is grandpapa and grandmamma's pet ; and, but for mamma's interference, there would be a possibility of their spoiling her.

Let us look into the parlor for a moment. Alice Lee and her mother are engaged in earnest conversation.

"My daughter," said Mrs. May, as she raised her eyes placidly to the face of her child, "you never speak of your old friend and playmate Frank Thompson. Can it be that you have forgotten him?"

"Forgotten him, mother? O, no ; I often think of him, but always as among the departed friends of my early youth. I have long believed that he was dead."

"But why do you think of him thus, my child? You never heard of his death."

"I know not, unless it is because I think he could not

have so entirely forgotten and neglected an early friend," she replied, sadly.

"You are mistaken, my daughter. He is not dead ; neither has he forgotten you. And now I have a confession to make and a secret to divulge, that I have not had the liberty to disclose before, that I think will convince you that I speak truly."

The mother then gave an account of his visit home, of his appearance when he heard of her misfortunes, of his grief on account of her sickness, and of his kindness and generosity in providing for her wants. "Since then," she continued, "he has been constantly informed of your welfare. Would you not like to read some of his letters?"

But the widowed one was now weeping. For a few moments past she has been living over again those days of sore affliction.

"Forgive me, my child, if I have caused you pain : justice to your friend demanded the sacrifice of your feelings. I thought you would like to hear from Frank. Here is his last letter : read it : it will give you strength. I think that he, too, has seen affliction, he is so changed."

"Did you say that he was changed, mother — that he was sad ? Poor, poor Frank ! Then he, too, has seen sorrow. He was ever so disinterested in his friendship for me that it seems strange he has never written to inform me of his trials. It would be a real pleasure to sympathize with so true a friend."

"You will have that pleasure soon, my beloved child,"

said her mother, every feature of her face expressing extreme satisfaction. "He is even now on his way here ; and, if he meets with no delay, he will be here shortly. He landed yesterday."

Before she had ceased speaking a carriage stopped at the door — the long-parted friends had met. For a time they wept in silence, seated side by side in the old arm chairs, where, in their childhood's days, they had often sat and talked joyfully of the present and the future.

"You are welcome here, my more than brother," Mrs. Lee at length said. "I am glad, very glad, to see you, though I greet you thus with tears. I have but just learned how much my departed husband and myself are indebted to you ; and in his name I thank you for all your kindness."

There was no response. Captain Thompson would not allow himself to speak until he could control his voice.

"This is indeed a strange meeting," he at length said ; "but I think it is not an inappropriate one."

"O, no," replied his companion ; "these tears have been a relief to me. My mother has just been telling me that you, too, have seen affliction ; and I was blaming you for your silence and want of confidence in me when you came. I had long believed you dead, and mourned for you as I should had you been my brother. Was it not unkind in you not to inform your old friend of your existence and welfare ?" she inquired.

"Perhaps so," he replied ; "but don't censure me too

severely until you know all the circumstances. I think you will forgive me when you do."

"I hope you will be able to prove yourself innocent of the charge of wilful neglect," she said, in a more lively tone. "But tea is ready. I think you must feel the need of refreshment after your ride."

CHAPTER XXXII.

MRS. LEE'S SURPRISE ON THE CAPTAIN'S DISCLOSURE OF HIS LONG-BURIED SECRET. — TRUE AND DISINTERESTED FRIENDSHIP REWARDED.

MR. MAY was delighted to meet the captain again. Susie thought he was a beautiful man ; and she was soon a great favorite of his. He had much to relate of his foreign travels that was not only interesting and amusing, but instructive. Since his return home he had purchased a fine horse and carriage ; and almost every day they indulged in delightful drives.

"Make this your home," said the farmer : "you are welcome to stay as long as you please : we can never be sufficiently grateful for your kindness to our child."

And he did stay week after week, "growing younger and handsomer every day," so Mrs. May told her husband ; "and Alice seems to enjoy herself better than I was afraid she ever would again, poor thing !"

Mrs. Lee often accompanied the captain in his walks as well as rides around their native town. She felt a mournful satisfaction in talking of her husband and lost

children ; for she was sure of his attention and sympathy. "But I am selfish," she said one day ; "and I have often thought that afflictions make us so. I talk continually of my own trials, and never give you a chance to speak of yours ; but now," seating herself under a shady tree, "is a good time, and here is a good place, for you to explain yourself in regard to your long silence and apparent neglect of friends."

"No, no ; not here ; the sun is high," he replied, smiling faintly. "I prefer a moonlight hour to confess my faults and lay open the secrets of my soul for your inspection. As you are to be both judge and jury in my case, I must choose the most favorable time and place."

"You shall certainly be your own judge in that matter and act your own pleasure," said Alice, gayly.

"Thank you," said the captain. "How much that sounds like yourself ! It seems but yesterday since we were young, Alice, strolling through these woods and over the hills as happy as the young songster that sings so gayly in yon spreading tree. But the wings of our spirits have been clipped by sorrow, and we no longer soar to such lofty heights of blissful enjoyment ; yet I trust that you, who have such capacities for happiness, will not be forever sad. Your children are not only beautiful, but good ; in them you certainly possess a rich fund of pleasure. But I am alone in the world," he said, sorrowfully, bowing his head on his hand.

"O," thought Alice, "some secret sorrow is buried in his bosom ; when will he let me share it ? Dear friend,"

she said, softly, "your sympathy has made me strong. May I not claim the privilege of a friend and share your sorrows also?"

"Perhaps you could not sympathize with me," he said, looking at her earnestly: "then why should I disturb you with a secret that for twenty years has been darkening my pathway and turning my youthful days into the soberness of maturer years? Would you believe it, that I have enjoyed more in the last few weeks than in those many years? But we must go now. I have planned a ride for to-morrow. Would you not like to visit your former home?"

Mrs. Lee had longed to visit the last resting-place of her husband and children; and she cordially accepted his invitation. She had chosen the most secluded place in the churchyard to bury her precious dead: beneath the spreading boughs of a majestic oak they were sleeping. How sadly she wound her way among the tombstones, leaning on the arm of her old friend — stopping to gaze wistfully upon the fragrant flowers that, twined by the hand of love, blossomed so sweetly upon the bosom of many a child! She sighed as she thought of the neglected spot where the remains of her own loved ones reposed. But now she stopped and raised her hands in wonder and surprise. A vision of enchanting loveliness has met her view. She stood beside the mighty oak; an elegant and substantial iron fence surrounded its entire base. Within its enclosure, a pure, chaste shaft of marble rears its stately head until the green boughs of the oak rest gracefully

upon its top. On one side had been chiselled an angel, bearing an urn containing three beautiful rosebuds, that had been clipped from the parent bush on earth to bloom in heaven. Beneath the angel with the urn and sickle were inscribed the following lines : —

“ The Lord hath need of these flowerets gay,
The reaper said, and smiled ;
Sweet emblems of the earth are they,
Where he was once a child.”

On the opposite side was, “ To the Memory of Edward Lee,” together with his age and date of his death, &c., with these lines inscribed : “ There is rest for the weary in heaven.”

Honeysuckles, jasmines, snowdrops, and roses were scattered around in rich profusion. A beautiful trellis was so constructed as to form an arch over the four graves, upon which was slowly creeping the clinging ivy. A white rosebush had been planted upon each little grave, and, at the foot of Mr. Lee's, a small cedar tree : every thing was in perfect taste. A seat had been constructed under the tree, upon which Mrs. Lee and her companion had seated themselves. Alice raised her eyes to his face, as if waiting for him to solve the beautiful mystery.

“ Who,” she said at length, “ has anticipated my wishes, and so splendidly embellished the resting-place of my beloved dead ? ”

She read her answer in her companion's looks. Covering her face with her hands, she leaned her head on his

shoulder and eloquently wept her thanks. Could you have seen the exterior of Captain Thompson, you would have said, "What a cold, indifferent man!" But, had you seen the workings of his heart, you would have given a very different verdict.

There he sat, motionless and statue-like, one arm slightly supporting the frail form of her who was now weeping upon his shoulder. This little act of confidence, so simple in itself, had filled his soul with joy too great for utterance. His whole being was wrapped in a cloud of delightful emotions. How he longed to hush the singing of the merry birds, and still the beating of his wildly throbbing heart, lest he should break the enchantment of the hour!

The old light that he had thought extinguished long ago was kindling again; and hopes that he had stifled and buried in the remotest niche of his heart were slowly rising before him, not like spectres, but as beacon lights of future bliss. The secret that he had so nobly kept could no longer be restrained; but words of deep, undying love, that, like caged birds, had fluttered to be free, could not be checked. After a long silence, the accumulated emotions and affections of years were poured wildly, almost incoherently, forth. Mrs. Lee would have raised her head; but he detained her.

"You have asked me for my secret: is not this a fitting time and place? Here, in the presence of the dead, I will unfold the nameless sorrow of my life, that has never before been uttered. You promised me your sympathy; but

now you shrink away. O, why did you seek my confidence? for now my fate will be so much harder to bear. You weep again," he said, in softened tones. "Are these tears for me? Then you pity me. The time has been when your pity would have wounded; but now it is a precious balm."

In a milder, calmer frame he told her of his early love; his deep regret when he knew she loved another; of all he had suffered on account of her misfortunes; the pleasure that he had experienced, in promoting the welfare of herself and family; of his agency in procuring employment for her husband, lest his old habits might return; and, lastly, the happiness he had experienced in improving and beautifying the last resting-place of her cherished ones, through the agency of Dr. Drew.

Mrs. Lee had listened in silence; her head had gradually fallen on his bosom; for the spirit of her departed husband seemed whispering to her soul, "There rest your weary head, my beloved; for a love so pure and strong should no longer remain unrequited — a friendship so disinterested should meet with a rich reward. Lean there," again the spirit seemed to whisper; "let the manly arm that now supports you guide and protect you in your lonely way; and my smiles and my love shall overshadow you both."

"Alice," continued the captain, in a pleading tone, "must I again leave you? Can you let me go?"

"Not if a heart all crushed and bleeding can repay you for all your love; not if a life whose freshness and fra-

grance has been spent can make you happy," she replied, again burying her face deeply in her hands.

"Bless you, bless you, for those words of encouragement!" he said, drawing her closely to his heart and holding her there in silence for a moment. "Is it pity and gratitude alone which have prompted your decision? and are you not sacrificing too much, my Alice?"

She assured him there was no one upon earth with whom she could intrust her happiness and the care of her children but with him. "I find a sweet enjoyment in your society; your sympathy is precious to me; and, if I can make you happy, it will be a delightful employment. But you will sometimes bring me here," she whispered, "and let me weep upon your bosom as I have to-day."

"O, yes," he replied, in a joyful voice; "I will often bring you here to this delightful spot; but you will not always wish to weep. We will sit and talk of those spirits bright, who are freed from sin and sorrow; of their beautiful home; their employments and enjoyments: then my Alice will have no wish to weep. But the sun is sinking: we must return."

Mrs. Lee gathered a small bouquet; took a last, lingering look at the green, grassy mounds; and then they slowly retraced their steps to the carriage.

Nothing could exceed the unbounded delight of Susie when her grandmother told her, with smiles, and tears, and many kisses, that the handsome captain would some day be her father.

"Thank God," said the farmer, "for permitting me to

see my child so well provided for ! I feel that her happiness is safe in his hands. He deserves her ; that's true ; but I hope he will not think of taking her this long time, it is so pleasant to have her at home."

Alice, too, would have preferred remaining at home some time longer ; but the captain urged his plea with so much earnestness, and spoke of the long years that he had waited, that neither she nor her parents could resist.

"Your daughter shall not be long parted from you," he said ; "but one year at most ; for it is my intention to build immediately on the site of the old place, as there is no spot on earth half so dear as this."

He would like a house in the city this winter ; and, as the year of George Evelyn's probation was drawing to a close, he insisted that it would be his privilege to pay for Nellie's schooling ; and he meant to have the pleasure of giving her away.

Three months glide quickly away, in which both hearts and hands are busily employed ; and this certainly had been the case at Mr. May's. He was desirous of making a wedding as he had done on a former occasion, nearly twenty years ago. This, however, was not in accordance with the feelings of Mrs. Lee ; and the captain was so happy in the event that he had no choice of his own. Accordingly they were married at the residence of the village pastor : and now they are pleasantly located in their city residence, where we shall soon have the pleasure of seeing them. The old folks feel very lonely ; for their daughter has left them again.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE INGENIOUS PLAN OF OSCAR SCOTT.—A VISIT TO NELLIE.—
EXTREME SATISFACTION OF DR. DREW.

LET us return to the Bartlett family. They continued as friendly as ever to Mr. Evelyn ; he received numerous invitations and a surplus of attentions ; indeed, they did every thing in their power to bring him to an acknowledgment of a preference for their daughter. Again and again, by skilful manœuvring, they had contrived to leave him alone with her ; and she, — how artfully she had acted her part !

George Evelyn was becoming tired and disgusted with the scheming and plotting that he saw, and heartily wished himself out of the place. He expressed his feelings to a young friend one day and let him into the secret of his heart, dwelling at some length upon the good qualities of Nellie.

“ Ah, in love ! Engaged, too, I suppose ? ” replied his friend, laughing heartily. “ Well, I have a plan. How much will you give me to help you out of the snares which

Miss Lucille has spread around you — handsomely out of the whole scrape, I mean ? ”

“ Why, a house lot on Walnut Street, provided you do not circulate any thing against my moral character or divulge my secret. ”

“ Agreed ! ” cried Oscar Scott ; “ it shall be done ; but I tell you, Evelyn, you have offered high. I sha’n’t take such exorbitant pay ; for a job like that wouldn’t cost me an hour’s time or a wink of sleep. Just promise me an invitation to the wedding, and let Miss Lucille be there also. Give me the privilege of unravelling the mystery to her ; and your humble servant will feel himself suitably compensated for any little service he may do your honor. ”

“ I promise, ” said Mr. Evelyn, “ all that, and more too ; but I fear your task will not be as easy as you imagine. By what tactics do you expect to outgeneral the Bartletts ? ”

“ Why, I suppose, since you have lost your heart so completely, — and I consider that a loss, do not you ? — that it would not be a very great stretch of truth to whisper in Miss Lucille’s ear, the first opportunity, that my friend George Evelyn has met with a great loss. I shall express a great deal of sympathy — call you a fine fellow, &c. I shall then speak of the uncertainty of all things in general and some in particular. ”

“ If she should ask how much I had lost, what would you tell her ? ”

“ That I am very sorry I cannot inform her, as I am under the law of secrecy. ”

Mr. Evelyn was surprised a short time after, when calling at Mr. Bartlett's, to observe the change that had come over the spirit of their dreams. They seemed all at once to have grown very cold and distant in their manner to him, and he was not troubled with invitations or attentions.

Now, let us look in for a moment upon Nellie. Her life flows smoothly and pleasantly on like that of any other good, studious schoolgirl; she is satisfied and grateful for present blessings, joyfully looking forward to a happy future. The correspondence between her and her affianced is such as in every sense to promote joy and satisfaction. The little palefaced girl of fifteen has changed so wonderfully that they who have not seen her since would scarcely know her now. Her year has almost expired; and, although she loves her teachers and her studies and has formed pleasant acquaintances, she is looking anxiously forward to its close.

Her future father-in-law has visited her, in company with her mother and sister. At first the thought of her mother's forming another alliance was unpleasant to her; but now she rejoiced that she had found such a friend and protector, and candidly acknowledged to herself that the constant, unfading love of the captain deserved the reward of her mother's hand.

Dr. Drew was almost wild with delight at the happy termination of the little romance in which he had played so conspicuous a part; for it was through him the captain had bestowed many of his benefits; and now he sees a

happy future looming up, not only for his much-esteemed friend, but also for the noble captain.

He did not have much trouble in reconciling Fred to his mother's marriage ; although he vehemently affirmed when it was first talked of, that he would never, never, to the latest day of his life, call him father, if his mother did marry him. He had had one father ; and that was enough for him.

One evening the doctor invited him and his youngest daughter, Lilla, to take a walk with him to the graveyard. There was a strong friendship existing between this very young couple that bade fair to ripen into a warmer sentiment ; at all events, the mild and quiet Lilla seemed just the one to restrain the impetuosity of the impulsive Fred.

The doctor felt a glow of pride as the children glided along before him, holding an animated discussion upon the merits and demerits of Captain Thompson. Lilla was decidedly of the opinion that he would feel differently about him before he left the churchyard.

Fred thought it would be a strange place to become reconciled to a new father ; but Lilla had been initiated, and, girllike, she persisted in her assertion. And she was right ; for when he had seen the beautiful place, that had been fitted up with so much taste and expense, his feelings softened. After listening to the doctor's account of the captain's kindness and generosity, he was ready to admit that he was a very nice sort of a man, and that perhaps he might like him after a while.

"You like your place, my boy?" said the doctor.

"Yes, sir," answered Fred. "Why do you ask?"

"Because it is to him you owe your present advantages. I should never have thought of making an M. D. of you if he had not proposed it."

"But what did he know about me?" said Fred, his eyes flying open with astonishment.

"He loved your mother, Fred, when they were children together, long before he was as old as you; and, loving her, he felt interested in the welfare of her children."

That was enough. Fred was satisfied that it was all right, just as it should be; and he was ready to acknowledge to Lilla his willingness to call his mother's husband father.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE RESIDENCE OF CAPTAIN THOMPSON.—THE WEDDING OF NELLIE.—THE MORTIFICATION OF MISS LUCILLE, AND DEATH OF SQUIRE HAYNES.

ENTER with me, then, dear reader, that elegant brick dwelling house with marble pillars, having a large area in front, surrounded by a costly iron fence enclosing two fine old elms. A more beautiful structure could not be chosen in a city like this. The house is in a blaze of light. O, what a hum of merry voices comes floating to us from the drawing rooms! What a pleasant company has assembled! And on what occasion but to celebrate the marriage of Nellie Lee?

She is now in her room. Her dress is of rich white silk, with an overdress of lace, elegantly embroidered. A long gossamer veil, confined by a beautiful wreath of orange blossoms, floats gracefully from her head. Her greatest ornament is that of a meek and gentle spirit.

But, as this is the bridal chamber, we will take a view of it. It is quite large. The long windows are shaded by heavily embroidered curtains, which sweep the floor, over

which, and reaching nearly to the centre of the window, is another, of delicate blue and gold-colored damask, with fringe and tassels to match, suspended by a magnificent curtain holder. The lounges, chairs, and ottomans are of the same color. The walls are hung with gold and cream-colored paper, the border harmonizing with the furniture. The mirror is oval, and the frame richly carved ; and upon a table in one corner of the room lie a richly-bound Bible and Hymn Book, with gold clasps. Flowers in rich profusion adorn the room, and the air is laden with their fragrance.

But we must no longer loiter ; for the bridal hour has come, and we must hasten to the drawing room. We are there gracefully received by Captain Thompson and his wife and are seated near them.

The front drawing room is reserved for the bridal train, who have now entered and taken their appropriate places.

The venerable, grayhaired pastor from the bride's native village will perform the ceremony ; for Mrs. Thompson and Nellie both wished that he, who had comforted and sympathized with them in their afflictions, should now participate in their happiness and prosperity. Dr. Drew and family are also there, one of his daughters officiating as bridesmaid.

O, that was a lovely sight, to behold those fair maidens, clothed in robes of spotless white, and the bride looking sweetly calm and happy. Her appearance was graceful ; her dress elegant, and admirably fitted to become her style of feature and figure ; and George Evelyn had no cause to

blush when he received her from the hand of her aged friend.

The blessing had no sooner been pronounced than the attention of the company was diverted by the sweet notes of the harp, playing a prelude to a lively tunc. Two heavy curtains were hanging in the back part of the room ; and it was from behind one of them the music came. All was silence and expectation.

One of the curtains was at length raised, discovering a young girl dressed in a loose, flowing robe of white muslin, confined at the waist with a pale-blue scarf, embroidered with white. A garland of natural flowers encircled her head ; her golden locks hung in glossy ringlets around her shoulders. She was seated upon a low ottoman, with her harp resting by her side. A beautiful youth was standing by her, with hat in hand, looking down into her face. The moment that the curtain rose, without moving, they commenced singing, the hand of the young man reaching towards the lady : —

“Come, come, come, come to the bridal feast,
Come to the bridal bower ;
Let your hearts be light and joyous,
For this is the happy hour —
The happy, happy hour.
Yes, two loving hearts are one :
O, this is a happy hour.”

After this verse had been repeated the singing ceased, and the performers remained perfectly motionless, looking like creations of fancy.

But now the rich tones of a flute attract the listening ear ; and as one curtain falls the other rises, disclosing to the admiring gazers three noble-looking youths, full of life and vigor. The one in the centre played the flute, from which issued sweet, enchanting music. At the right stood a beautiful brighteyed boy, with golden ringlets, bearing a goblet of pure cold water. He stood as if in the act of presenting it to his companions ; and you could just catch the outlines of two shining wings, upon which was this inscription : "The Triumph of the Maine Law."

On the left stood a young girl of the most dazzling beauty. Her flowing robe was thickly bedecked with golden spangles ; on her round, white arms sparkled the ruby and the diamond ; around her swanlike neck was thrown a golden chain, from which was suspended various keys, which were labelled, "Keys to the Palace of Pleasure." In her hand she bore a sparkling wine cup, which she was offering to her companions with a most bewitching smile.

When the curtain rose two of the young men were turned towards the boy, while the gaze of the third was riveted upon the beautiful female figure before him ; but when the song commenced the smile gave place to a lowering frown. She still reached out the tempting cup ; but the spell seemed to be broken by the song ; for his eyes drooped to the feet of the beautiful being, and with a shudder he turned to the goblet of water. He has discovered the cloven foot, which the tempter could not conceal. The words of the song were these : —

"Cold water is the drink for the bridal feast ;
O, that's the drink for me ;
For there's madness in the sparkling cup :
O, flee ! flee ! flee !
Yes, there's madness in the sparkling cup :
Then bring cold water for me.

"Away, away, with the tempting bowl !
It has no charms for me ;
For it kills the body and the soul :
O, flee ! flee ! flee !
Yes, it kills the body and the soul :
Then bring cold water for me."

The song ceased and the curtain dropped. Now the busy hum of voices commences again. All are eager to offer their congratulations to the happy pair.

According to promise, our old friend Oscar Scott is there ; and by a little skilful manœuvring he has seated himself by the side of Miss Lucille Bartlett, who, with her parents, has been invited almost entirely for his gratification. After conversing with her for a few minutes in a cursory manner, he remarked, "Our friend Mr. Evelyn seems to have had his loss wonderfully made up to him. I am rejoiced at his good fortune ; for he is a fine young man."

"Yes," stammered the lady ; "but I wonder at the bride's choice, it seems so much more proper for ladies to marry those whose fortunes are at least equal to their own. It must be rather humiliating to George to have his wife look down upon him ; don't you think so, Mr. Scott ?"

"I don't know as I exactly understand you," said he, with a roguish twinkle in his eye.

"Why, I refer to the difference in their fortunes. You know you told me that Mr. Evelyn had lost his, or a large share of it; and I presume he has married Miss Thompson to retrieve it; has he not, think you? I should judge from appearances that her father is a very wealthy man," she continued, looking around with evident admiration spiced with envy. "What beautiful stucco work! I never saw any thing so exquisitely beautiful in my life. I do wish papa would get a model of it. What elegant pillars those are that support the centre of the room! And those clusters of grapes that encircle them,—how perfectly natural! It would seem almost impossible to carve them upon wood. Those baskets of fruits and flowers that hang between the pillars,—are they not perfectly elegant? I like the foreign look of the mantle ornaments; and those rugs,—they must be of French manufacture. The flowers look as if they were fragrant. I admire the paintings, those fine old castles have such an aristocratic look. I wish papa's taste was a little different; he has no love for the art of painting at all: mamma and I often regret it."

It is uncertain how long Miss Lucille might have gone on admiring the splendor of the rooms, and wishing father would get this, that, and the other, if her companion had not interrupted her.

"You are laboring under two mistakes, Miss Bartlett, that I beg leave to correct. The first is in regard to Mr. Evelyn's loss. I think I never told you he had lost money; I referred to his affections merely; and when you asked me for the particulars, I was not at liberty to disclose

them. "This accounts for the first mistake," said he, looking her keenly in the face. "I supposed you understood the case perfectly, and have always admired your magnanimity in not teasing him on the subject."

"George Evelyn not lost his fortune!" said Lucille, in a bitter tone, her face and neck becoming crimson, then pale as marble; for she thought with pain of the change that had taken place in her treatment of and appearance towards him in consequence of his supposed loss of fortune. She remembered, too, with shame and confusion, that the young man now looking at her, evidently enjoying her discomfiture, had been the mark at which she had aimed, of late, all her shining darts; and now her motives were exposed to him. She wished she was dead, or at home, or any where but there.

"Are you faint, Miss Bartlett?" inquired Oscar, in a sympathizing tone.

She shook her head.

He then proceeded: "The second mistake is this: our mutual friend has not married Miss Thompson, but Miss Lee—the young lady who once occupied a place in your father's family as chambermaid. Do you not recognize her? Captain Thompson is her step-father."

Poor Lucille! She could have screamed, fainted, gone into hysterics, or done any other ridiculous thing; but pride—stern, unyielding pride—came to her relief; for, as she had turned towards the bride, the veil that before had enveloped her person was now thrown back, and Nellie appeared before her, looking as sweet and happy as she herself was wretched.

"Shall I ring for a glass of water?" said Mr. Scott, perceiving that she looked very pale, and expressing many fears that she was not well.

"You may ring for my father," she replied, in a husky voice; "for the heat of the room is intolerable."

After a whispered consultation the Bartlett family retired, not even deigning to congratulate the happy pair, neither taking leave of Captain Thompson's family, or the much admired Mr. Scott, who was much amused at the sequel of his romantic plot. Nellie, on being informed of the particulars, expressed a sincere desire that the chagrin and mortification Lucille had experienced might not be lost upon her. Whether her hope will be realized or not is a secret that remains to be found out.

Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn were persuaded to spend the winter with the parents of the bride. This was particularly gratifying to Nellie, affording her as it did a fine opportunity for practical knowledge in the details of house-keeping as conducted in a large establishment.

Who shall say that the bride, mother and daughter, were not happy in their prosperity, if they did sometimes weep, as, seated in their pleasant sitting room, they talked of the past, the duties they had tried faithfully to perform, and the sorrows as well as joys they had experienced?

Captain Thompson felt amply rewarded for all his past sufferings in the happiness he now enjoyed; and George Evelyn has never for a moment regretted that he chose the reformed inebriate's daughter for his bride.

They were all seated together one evening, the ladies

sewing, while their husbands were reading the news of the day, when Captain Thompson suddenly exclaimed, " Wife! your old enemy has met with his just reward ! "

" What do you mean ? " cried both ladies.

The captain then read as follows :—

HORRIBLE SUICIDE.— On the 12th instant, in the town of W——, Squire Haynes committed suicide under the following circumstances: He had long been suspected of keeping a gambling house; and recently the evidence had become so strong that the authorities of the place were all prepared to descend upon him. It was pretty clearly proved also that he sold liquor in violation of the Maine law; and the inhabitants of the place had expressed their determination to pursue him to the utmost extent of the law. We are told that when he heard he was caught, without any way of escape, he put an end to his existence. It is a strange coincidence that the foul deed was committed with a pistol that once belonged to the lamented Mr. Lee, who, it is believed, fell a victim to the avaricious, blackhearted villain.

Life was not extinct when he was found; and after swallowing a cordial he revived, and acknowledged his dishonesty in obtaining the property of Mr. Lee, stating also that he had recently forged the name of his widow for the purpose of disposing of her property. - He died as the fool dieth, cursing God that he had ever been born.

A few days after Mrs. Thompson received a letter from

Dr. Drew, stating all the particulars in the case, informing her also that evidence had now come to light that conveyed the property of her former husband into the hands of his heirs, and wishing her to inform him what steps he should take in the affair. He also stated that the widow of the wretched man was left in a destitute condition ; and he thanked God he had left no children to inherit his poverty and degradation.

Mrs. Thompson, after consulting her husband and children, returned this noble answer :—

DEAR SIR : Please to secure the use of my thirds to the widow of Squire Haynes during her lifetime ; after which it will be divided among my heirs.

Yours with respect,

ALICE LEE THOMPSON.

To Dr. Drew.

Both Mrs. Thompson and her daughter were deeply moved at the tragical end of the destroyer of their peace ; but the cloud could not long remain in the presence of the sunny light that pervaded their hearts and homes. May their future lives be as peaceful and happy as they had once been dark and dreary !

Should you ever in your foreign travels chance to visit the noble ship " Lady Alice," you would scarcely recognize our old friend Mike Thompson in her gentlemanly and respectful commander.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CONCLUSION.

It is neither the wish nor expectation of the author of this book to create a sensation in the literary world ; but it has long been her desire to lay before the public some of the heartrending effects of intemperance that have passed under her own observation from time to time. She has been prevented heretofore from doing so in consequence of very feeble health and the pressure of numerous duties.

The facts here presented are those the writer considers to be the most attractive to the young. The characters are all drawn from real life, and have been presented in as truthful a manner as it was possible under the circumstances. In speaking of the evils of intemperance and of the misery and degradation that ever follow in its train, truth is so much stranger than fiction that those who have never looked forth with an inquiring eye and sympathizing heart upon the widely-extended domain that has been laid waste by this terrible, desolating scourge, would turn away

incredulous should the true characters of the majority of dramdrinkers and dramsellers be presented before them in all their hideous loathsomeness and disgusting deformity. Nor would the state of public morals be elevated by dwelling upon the obscene and brutal spectres and spectacles that are standing 'like beacon lights upon every hill and in every valley in our land to warn the young and unwary to beware of the tempting wine cup and sparkling bowl. Who does not know that too much familiarity with scenes of vice and suffering has a tendency to harden and vitiate the human mind?

We should allow ourselves to gaze on immoral, debasing spectacles just long enough to see them in all their full proportions, and do all in our power to rescue the poor deluded victims, and then turn away as one would from the most noxious and contagious disease. We look upon the filthy form of the poor inebriate as he staggers along through our streets; and how are our hearts affected by our eyes?

Do those of us who have indulgent and respectable fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons remember that this poor libel on humanity, this fallen, ruined being, was once a man, with the same hopes and aspirations swelling in his bosom and the same moral and religious responsibilities resting upon him? And do we remember that somewhere perhaps there are not only parents, brothers, and sisters, but perchance a poor heartstricken wife and worse than orphan children, weeping over the ruin they could not avert?

And do our eyes suitably affect our hearts? Do we weep over all this ruin? or do we turn away to hide a smile from the graceless boy, who, destitute alike of pity and humanity, now hurls a snowball or a worthless joke at our worse than idiot brother? O, what a sad, sad sight—a form divine stripped of its glorious birthright and shorn of its divinity! The light of reason beams not in his soul, and manhood looks not forth from his bloodshot, haggard eyes. All the higher, nobler instincts of his being are quenched, and that, too, by man's cupidity. And do our eyes suitably affect our hearts when we look upon such a sad, sad sight? Do our hearts suitably affect our understanding, and our understanding our actions?

The records of the past answer, No! emphatically No! While the present gives forth an uncertain sound an altar has been erected to the goddess of Temperance; and many philanthropic friends of religion and morality have laid themselves and their fortunes upon it, manfully resolved to fight on till the many heads of the hydra monster shall be severed and rolled ignobly in the dust. But the enemies are numerous; and, unless the Aarons and Hurs come boldly forth to hold up the weary hands of the devoted band and cheer their fainting spirits, they will prevail; and the cause of humanity and religion will be trampled beneath their sacrilegious feet, and vice and misery will sweep, as with a besom of destruction, the face of our happy land.

Arise, then, all ye sons and sires of America! Look around you, on the right hand and the left; look at the

sin and misery, at the poverty, crime, and degradation, that the monster Intemperance has sown broadcast on the soil where your fathers sleep. Harken to the sighs and groans of the struggling who have been dragged down by the frenzied hands of those who should have been their protectors and guides through life. O, do not turn away with indifference from that pleading, helpless band !

The first steps have been taken in this great reform by some of our New England States. Would to God that all would follow in their track ! Yes, the law, that mighty engine in the hands of righteous rulers for good, no longer folds its protecting arms around the monster's hideous form, and the manufacturers and venders no longer walk beneath the bloodstained folds of its ample cloak. Yes, the sanction of the law has been removed ; and this nefarious traffic now stands forth, naked and terrible, before the gaze of the astonished multitude. Yes, the "Maine law" has stamped forever with shame and infamy all those engaged in this destructive work. Then let the good, the noble, and the true come forth in one solid phalanx, not only to sustain the law, but to create a public sentiment that shall frown down forever and extirpate this band of worse than highway robbers and mountain thieves.

The writer has looked on the passage of the "Maine law" as a great and important event in the history of the cause of temperance, believing that intemperance is the great plague spot of our nation — a canker worm, that is gnawing at the very root and heart of our social and domestic institutions, filling our almshouses, our state prisons,

and penitentiaries. Our insane and orphan asylums, — they, too, are living witnesses, that can be seen and read of all men, of the terrible scourge that is wasting, not only the life and substance of our brother man, but the mind also — the immortal mind. Yes, the soul, the never-dying soul, has been shipwrecked and lost for time ; and who shall dare to raise the curtain from before the mysteries of eternity and say that the blighting and withering effects of intemperance shall not extend beyond the grave ?

Then let the watchmen who are placed on the battlements of Zion cry aloud and spare not. Let Christians make no compromise with this fell destroyer of our race ; let the purity of their lives be a constant rebuke to the vices around them ; let not the smell of the smoke that arises continually from the altar of debauchery and intemperance be found upon their persons and around their homes ; let them never dare to raise the wine cup and the more refined intoxicating beverages to their lips, lest their brothers' blood be found on their skirts.

Was there ever an inebriate who did not first take the intermediate steps ? When the downward course is once taken the descent is easy and rapid, and destruction is almost certain. Commit the first wrong act, and it requires less moral courage to resist the second ; and so on to the end.

The author firmly and candidly believes, after a careful investigation of the subject, that temperance, in the broad sense of the word, is the basis of all prosperity — the foundation of human happiness — the corner stone of religious,

moral, and intellectual greatness ; for the greatest minds have fallen, bleeding sacrifices, on the altar of intemperance, and perish like the beasts which go downward.

And has woman nothing to do in this great work of redeeming a ruined world from their infatuation ? Has she, who has drank most deeply of the bitter dregs of the intoxicating cup, no part or lot in this reform ? Must the suffering mother and daughter fold their hands in silent anguish, without the poor relief of striving to break the cords that bind them down to misery ? O, no ; she has much to do. It is in her power to so mould and make the sentiments and principles of the rising generation, that, when they shall take their stand in the arena to act in the great drama of life, they shall be found true and stanch friends of temperance.

Women of America ! I beseech you to be true to this mighty trust. By the hearts of thousands of our sex, which have been crushed until they bleed at every pore, I beseech you to wield that power. By the homes of comfort and elegance that have been made desolate and wretched ; by the unnumbered graves that have been filled by cruelty and want ; by the blasted hopes and silent woes that have been wrung from widowed hearts ; by the upturned face of pleading childhood, and the duty you owe your God, yourself, and your posterity, — I implore you to do your duty.

In view of these momentous facts, the author has felt it her duty to add her testimony in behalf of temperance and morality, sincerely regretting that neither her health,

her talents, nor her time will permit her to do justice to this important subject. If her humble endeavors shall be the means of saving some from the unspeakable misery and horror of the drunkard's life and his wretched home, and lead them to search for the path of virtue and temperance, then her object will be accomplished.



